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Soviet believers rejoice in millennium

By Martha Skelton

MOSCOW (BP) — Early leaders predicted the death of religious faith in the Soviet Union was only a matter of time.

This year the faithful — most born under communism — are celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of institutional Christianity in their country.

Out of a population of 287 million, more than 50 million Soviet citizens are Orthodox believers; estimates on evangelicals stand at three million plus.

In all, an estimated 40 percent of the population are religious. Members of the Communist Party total 19 million, about six percent of the population.

Events to celebrate the Christian anniversary took place June 4-16 in several Soviet cities, and evangelist Billy Graham was there to participate.

"The eyes of all the Christian world are on these (millennium) events," Graham told a reception meeting at the Moscow Airport upon his arrival. The celebration has a nationwide impact for believers and nonbelievers alike, Graham said, since the Orthodox Church has been "an integral and important part of Russian civilization. In fact, the history for the last 1,000 years of the Russian Church and the history of Russian civilization have been so closely linked that they cannot be separated."

The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) plans seminars in September as part of the observance.

"We stress the fact that it is the millennium of Christianity," says All-Union Council President Vasily Logvinenko. "That's why the event is precious to our hearts."

Christian activity and churches in what is now the Soviet Union date back centuries earlier than the year 988. But it was in that year that Prince Vladimir, ruler of the state Kievan Rus', chose Eastern Orthodoxy as an official faith and had his subjects baptized in the Dnieper River in what is now the Ukrainian city of Kiev.

The celebration has given all Christians an opportunity to point out their contributions to morality, to culture and history and to put into perspective a movement of centuries in an area dominated by a movement of decades.

"God helps us make people think about what we lost when we destroyed our churches. Our society not only lost architecture, but lost its soul," says Vladimir Sorokin, rector of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra Theological Academy and Seminary in Leningrad. "Understanding without God is very poor."



The Church of St. Basil the Blessed in Red Square, Moscow, is now a museum. (Religious News Service Photo)

Millennium-sparked discussions about who Christians are and what they believe are part of a growing public role for believers. Some examples:

— Logvinenko recently was interviewed by the newspaper, Moscow News.

— A recent television program discussed religion and politics, showing scenes from church life. Members of the audience asked the moderator several questions, including why Bibles were not readily available.

— "The Temple," a film about Christianity in the Soviet Union, is playing in public movie theaters. It details the overreaction against religion that followed the consolidation of communist power in the early 1920s. Orthodox believers of today tell about their faith.

— And religious leaders are pursuing new legislative proposals to alter the 1929 Soviet legal code.

All-Union Council representatives and others attended one meeting at the Council of Religious Affairs to propose changes in the laws relating to

religious life. Legislative revamping has no timetable, although Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's mention of it in early May stirred hopes that something would be forthcoming.

What Christians are looking toward is "law equal for everybody," according to Sorokin.

This major request of Soviet people of faith, that religious faith and atheism be treated equally, is unlikely to be accepted, according to a Council of Religious Affairs official. Current law allows for the public propagation of atheism but not of religious faith.

Requests that might have a better chance include lifting restrictions on social work and religious education of children and young people. Already some evidence of this exists.

"We try to work under the umbrella of regulation but at the same time the mood of society," explains All-Union Council General Secretary Alexei Bichkov. "Authorities see and do not raise their voices. They recognize as an experiment what may be in the future normal."

In May Baptists in Moscow were to begin volunteer work at a Moscow hospital. Many churches now have organized youth seminars and meetings as well as children's services on holidays. Young people and children are evident in all church services.

Mixed signals remain on other fundamental changes. There are encouraging signs, such as an announced halt in the use of psychiatric facilities as punishment for prisoners of conscience and a slightly higher rate of Jewish emigration. But a fall 1987 prediction by Konstantin Kharchev, Council of Religious Affairs chairman, that all remaining "prisoners of faith" would be released by the end of the year has not materialized. Estimates are that several hundred such prisoners still are in custody.

Yet the terms "glasnost" or openness, and "perestroika," or restructuring, have more than a public relations sense to some believers.

"What was dangerous and wrong has now changed with 'perestroika' and 'glasnost,'" says Bichkov.

Some segments of society reportedly are showing a renewed interest in a spiritual dimension. "People want to renew the spiritual treasury, the religious heritage of the nation," says Sergei Nikolaev, superintendent of the northwest area for the Baptist union. "Their soul is seeking something more. They don't know what to call it. It is the desire of the soul to find the Creator. They need Jesus Christ."

The Baptist union still reports about 5,000 churches and a half-million members — figures that change little. The union churches baptize about 8,000 to 10,000 people a year, Bichkov says, but thousands are lost through death and removal from the church rolls by church discipline.

But encouraging trends are emerging, Logvinenko points out: 30 percent of converts baptized are under age 50 and about 20 percent of the people who attend church now come from non-religious backgrounds. And the union is in the process of starting a theological seminary after decades of relying upon a correspondence school to train pastors and lay leaders.

The churches are pursuing more public ministries, such as social involvement. One group of Christians has a vegetable and fruit cooperative.

It sends one ton out of every 10 tons of produce it harvests to a children's home in the north, where vegetables and fruit are scarce and expensive.

Bichkov says Soviet Baptists also would like to begin a weekly newspaper and radio programming from Moscow. Baptists already are doing such things in other socialist countries, such as East Germany, Hungary, and Poland, he says.

While not all believers see a major revival as imminent in the Soviet Union, they are working and praying in its anticipation.

Martha Skelton writes for The Commission magazine of the Foreign Mission Board.

Soviet physicians observe eye techniques in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — They didn't look any different from other Baptist Memorial Hospital operating room personnel in protective gowns, pants and surgical masks, but when they spoke, it was in Russian.

For two weeks in June, Glinchuk Yaroslav and Aleksei Kharizov, physicians from the Moscow Research Institute of Eye Microsurgery in the Soviet Union visited Memphis, Tenn., to observe techniques developed by Steve Charles, an ophthalmologist on Baptist Hospital's staff who invented and perfected techniques and tools for a delicate eye operation called vitreoretinal surgery.

Charles met the two Soviets when he visited Russia in August of 1987.

"These guys care about their patients," Charles said, adding, "They have pride in their work . . . They have the same case mix (of patients), the same medical problems in as Baptist Hospital of Memphis."

The Soviet Union are similar to those in the United States. "We have the same diseases, the same problems, same equipment," he said, adding smoking and drinking are serious concerns there, as here.

He said Soviet physicians receive similar training, undergoing six years of medical instruction, followed by two years in their medical specialty. In the United States, doctors receive five to 10 years in medical school and residency training.

Although the number of female physicians in the U.S. has reached 15 percent, in the Soviet Union, some 50 to 60 percent of the doctors are women, working in all medical specialties, Kharizov estimated.

One major difference between Soviet and American medicine, he said, is that all Soviet hospitals are government-owned and operated. His has no private hospitals such as Baptist Hospital of Memphis.

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The role of the pastor

By Herschel H. Hobbs

In Resolution No. 5 adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio, reference is made to "pastoral authority" and "authority of the pastor." Many of our people are wondering about the meaning of these terms. So just as one Baptist I propose to examine it in light of New Testament teachings.

Those drawing up this resolution quoted Heb. 13:17. "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch [are sleepless] over your souls, as those who will give an account." Happily they used the word "leaders" instead of "them that have the rule over you" (KJV). The Greek phrase is "the ones leading [or guiding] you." This suggests a shepherd (pastor) leading his flock.

"Obey" translates a verb which has many usages. Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon (Greek Dictionary) cites the meaning in Heb. 13:17 as "obey" as "follows." In light of "the ones leading you" it seems that "follow" is the preferred meaning. It is like sheep following the shepherd. "Submit" renders a verb meaning to yield, give way, submit to one's authority (Arndt and Gingrich). In terms of leadership, the first two seem preferable. If the shepherd leads one way and a sheep wants to go another way, the sheep should yield or give way to the shepherd's way.

In terms of the pastor-church relationship the sense is to follow the leader in carrying out the Lord's work. If a difference of opinion exists between pastor and people in the work, which cannot be resolved in conference, those with differences of opinion should yield or give way to the pastor's wishes. There can be no leadership without followship.

The reason given is not that the pastor has a divinely bestowed authority or the only pipeline to God, but because the Lord has made him responsible for the souls entrusted to him. Since he alone must give account to God, even if the plan fails, it should be because of his judgment as to the Lord's will, not one thrust upon him by others.

The term "pastoral authority" is a strange sound to most Baptist ears. The overall teachings of the New Testament do indicate that Jesus bestowed a special authority upon the apostles. But there is no scriptural indication that it was passed on to others in the sense of apostolic succession.

In the infant church in the first century, the New Testament was in process of being written. So they had no guide such as we have in the New Testament. Someone had to be in posi-

tion to make decisions, such as Peter and John authenticating the genuine salvation of Samaritans (Acts 8).

And yet, as you read Paul's epistles it is evident that, knowing he had this authority, he chose to use persuasion. A. T. Robertson suggests that Peter used it in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) and Paul in the case of Elymas (Acts 13). But these extreme cases are subject to interpretation.

Now let us look briefly at instances involving the apostles. In Acts 6 a problem arose in the Jerusalem church over aid to Grecian and Hebrew widows. The apostles had been handling this to the neglect of spiritual ministries. Others could handle the aid matter. The apostles did not choose such. Setting forth the quality of men needed, they told the church to search out such. Then the apostles appointed them to the work. It was a case of the congregation acting under the guidance of the apostles.

At the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15) the problem of how Gentiles could be saved was treated. An analysis of this chapter shows a congregational meeting, a committee meeting, and a second congregational meeting. James, the pastor, wrote a letter to Gentile churches saying, "It seemed good unto us . . . for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost [Spirit], and to us . . ." (vv. 25, 28). Certainly the "us" includes both apostles, the pastor, and the congregation.

In 1 Cor. 5 the church had to deal with a brother living immorally with his father's wife, evidently his step-mother. From Ephesus Paul wrote for them to dismiss the man from the fellowship. It was to be done "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4). We see in so grievous a case an element of Paul's apostolic authority in his instructions to the church. But "are gathered together" is a passive voice. The church was called together, probably by the pastor, and acted in the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1 Cor. 16:2-4 Paul urges, not orders, the church to gather the offering for relief of the Jerusalem saints. Then when he came to Corinth, "whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters [of recommendation], them will I send to bring the offering to Jerusalem." Paul did not choose these men; the church did.

The letter to Philemon is a classic example. Philemon's slave, Onesimus, had run away from Colossae to Rome where Paul led him to Christ. With this letter to Philemon he sent Onesimus back to Colossae. He ask-

ed Philemon to receive him, not as a slave, but as a Christian brother. As an apostle Paul could have commanded that Philemon do this. Instead, he wrote one of the most diplomatic letters on record. He wanted the decision to be Philemon's, not his.

Against this background let us examine the role of the pastor. It is best seen in Acts 20. On his final journey to Jerusalem, Paul's ship docked at Miletus, the seaport of Ephesus. He sent for the Ephesian elders (v. 17). In his address to them he said, "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood" (v. 28).

This was spoken to the elders. The Holy Spirit had placed (etheto) them as overseers, to feed the church of God. "Elders" translates presbuteros. Originally it referred to men who by virtue of old age were capable of giving wise counsel. "Overseers" renders episkopous, also translated as "bishop" (1 Tim. 3:1). In Greek life this word denoted men who oversaw the work of others to see that they did it properly. "To feed" translates poi-mainen. From this word comes the one for shepherd. It meant to tend as a shepherd. A pastoral word, from it comes our word pastor. These words refer to the duties of one office which we call pastor.

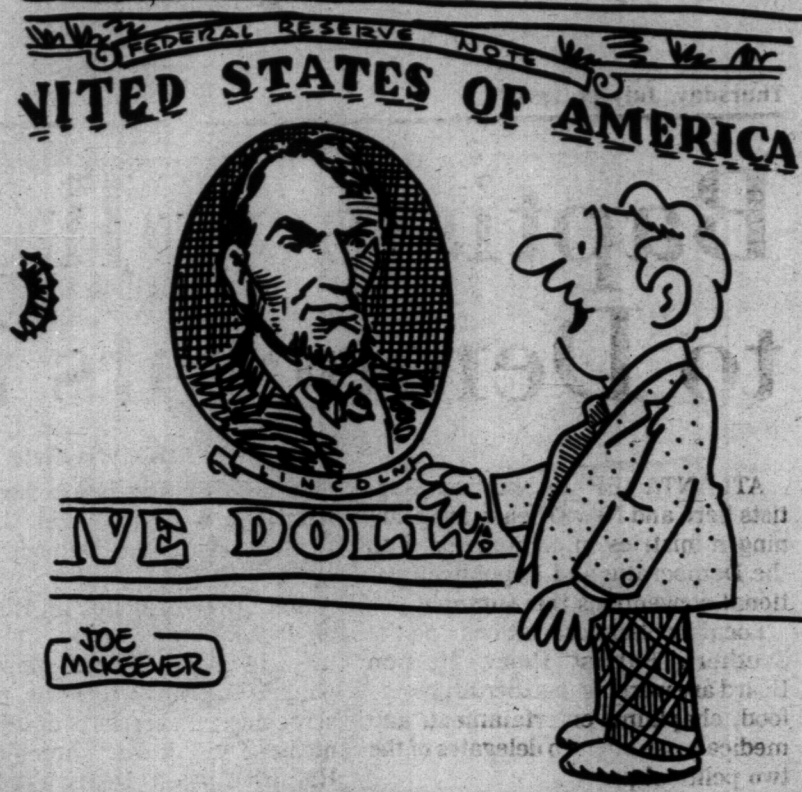
"Elder" suggests counsellor. "Bishop" involves administration, leadership in planning and overseeing the work and workers. "Shepherd" or "pastor" means to do for his flock everything a shepherd did for his sheep: feed, lead, protect, comfort, and the like. The word "bishop" implies a certain amount of authority, but it is the authority of leadership. According to Paul's words, a pastor is to fill all three of these roles.

Of interest, however, is the fact that the noun for "bishop" appears five times in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25 referring to Christ). Episkope refers to the office of bishop (1 Tim. 3:1). The verb episkopeo is used one time in the sense of oversight (1 Pet. 5:2). But Peter says one should exercise it not "as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples [examples] to the flock" (v. 3).

On the other hand, the word diakonos is the sense of "minister" and/or "servant" appears 27 times (see especially Matt. 20:26; 23:11; Mark 10:43; John 12:26; 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 3:7-8). Jesus used the verb form twice with reference to His ministry (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45).

Diakonos was used for the lowest

"GEORGE HAS BEEN VERY FAITHFUL — BUT WE'VE NOT SEEN ENOUGH OF YOU IN CHURCH RECENTLY!"



order of slaves. Thus the greater emphasis is upon the servant role. Nowhere in the New Testament is the pastor presented as a ruler.

The purpose of this article is not to downgrade the office of the pastor, but to try to put it in the proper perspective. I was a pastor for 44 years. If I had ten thousand lives to live, I would want to be a pastor in every one of them.

A wise pastor will involve his people in formulating a program. And he will work harder than anyone else in the performance of it. He should say, "Come on, folks, let's go!" When I reached the place where I had to say, "We have planned it together. Now you

go do it. My doctor told me to go home and take a nap" — I retired from the pastorate to enter another form of ministry.

I close this article by quoting with approval Presnall Wood, editor of the Baptist Standard June 22, p. 6.

"Pastors will do well to present themselves to their churches as pastors and not as presidents of a corporation. Churches will do well to respect the pastors in allowing their leadership through the Holy Spirit. Neither pastors nor churches are infallible. They need each other."

Herschel H. Hobbs is pastor emeritus of First Church, Oklahoma City.

Editors praise Gregory, pan Resolution No. 5

NASHVILLE (BP) — Baptist editors praised Joel Gregory and panned Resolution No. 5 on the pages of their state newspapers following the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, delivered the annual convention sermon. His message, "The Castle and the Wall," warned Southern Baptists about building a wall of orthodoxy around their convention and in the process tearing down the castle they are trying to protect.

"We are at a flashpoint," he said. "Southern Baptists cannot survive many more months of personal animosity in our midst."

Gregory preached "one of the finest sermons ever heard by Southern Baptists," wrote California's Herb Hollinger. Added R.G. Puckett of North

Carolina, "Gregory's convention sermon took us to the spiritual mountain-top."

Bob Allen of Maryland/Delaware praised the sermon as a potential "watershed in Southern Baptist life." But he warned, "Since it will in all likelihood not be heeded, however, it will go down as just another sermon."

Calling the sermon "a message that may well go down in history," the Northwest's James Watters wrote, "Gregory drew a clear line on the field of skirmish, demanding honesty, truthfulness and fair play that no local Christian or denominational politician should be able to cross with impunity as long as Gregory's message is remembered."

The editors did not have as fond words for the resolution, "On the (Continued on page 7)

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Baptists will minister to Democrats in Atlanta

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP) — Southern Baptists here and New Orleans are planning ministries in conjunction with the Democratic and Republican national conventions this summer.

Local Baptist associations and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board are working together to provide food, chaplains, entertainment, and medical assistance to delegates of the two political parties.

Democrats will meet in Atlanta July 18-21. Republicans will meet in New Orleans Aug. 15-18.

Eight Baptist associations in the greater Atlanta area plan to transform the parking lot of Baptist Tabernacle into "Good News Corner," using the "Good News America, God Loves You" logo. The downtown

church is located just a few blocks from the Georgia World Congress Center, where the Democrats will meet.

Activities scheduled in Atlanta include food service by Chic-Fil-A, musical performances, clowns and puppeteers, organ concerts, medical screenings, and crisis counseling, announced Bill Junker, director of the Home Mission Board's editorial department and a member of the planning committee.

Volunteers from the eight associations will answer tourist questions and share the Christian gospel with as many delegates as possible, Junker said.

In New Orleans, Southern Baptists are participating in a city wide effort

to provide chaplains at the Superdome and at area hotels during all sessions of the Republican convention. Jimmie Knox, special missions ministries missionary in New Orleans, said he hopes to enlist 60 volunteer chaplains.

Knox is heading the ministry effort sponsored by the New Orleans Federation of Churches. Local churches also are being enlisted to provide transportation for delegates between hotels and the Superdome.

Southern Baptists who plan to be at either convention and are interested in helping with these ministries should contact Junker or Knox through the Home Mission Board.

Mark Wingfield writes for the HMB.

Baptists are still divided, newspaper editors agree

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists remain divided, the convention's state newspaper editors agree.

They went home from this summer's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, and wrote editorials describing division within the SBC after a decade of theological/ political controversy.

California's Herb Hollinger set the context: "Ten years ago... the denomination's conservative conservatives revealed a plan to change the direction of the SBC. Some of the leaders of this group said it would take 10 years, but they were more than willing and, as it has turned out, able to do it. They said much of the SBC (was)... moving in a 'liberal' direction, away from historic Baptist roots, at least as interpreted by conservatives."

Wrote Lynn Clayton of Louisiana: "The outsiders are in, and the insiders are out... Fifteen years ago, some more conservative constituents of the convention belonged to the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship and published the Southern Baptist Journal because they felt disenfranchised and unheard. Now, some moderates belong to the Southern Baptist Alliance and publish SBC Today because they feel disenfranchised and unheard."

"It is a classic case of those on the outside, or at least perceiving themselves to be on the outside, rising up and putting the insiders out."

Editors noted several factors that, they said, confirm division within the Baptist house:

— Conservative candidate Jerry Vines' "razor thin" presidential victory over the moderates' candidate, Richard Jackson. This 10th consecutive victory for the conservatives ensures control of the SBC trustee nomination process.

— Election of trustees for SBC agencies, all of whom — according to the policies and guidelines followed by outgoing President Adrian P. Rogers — must be biblical inerrantists.

— Dissolution of the Peace Committee, which labored for three years without bringing peace.

— Passage of a resolution that downplayed moderate emphases within Baptists' doctrine of the priesthood of the believer and emphasized conservatives' favored views enhancing the authority of the pastor.

Editorials sought to describe and define the division and its ramifications.

"Among Southern Baptists in San Antonio, there were no winners, only losers," wrote North Carolina's R.G. Puckett. "The election of Jerry Vines as president by a mere 692 votes out of a total of 31,291 cast confirms how close and hopelessly divided we are. There was no landslide; there is a deadlock."

"No pastor in his — or her, for that matter — right mind would accept a call to a church with such a narrow

majority," added Bob Allen of Maryland/Delaware. "The vote represents a convention still bitterly divided, and until harmony is restored, there will be no winners in Southern Baptist life."

Some editors declared the solution is in the hands of conservatives, who now control the SBC presidency and trusteeships.

"Leaders of the more conservative segment of the convention must now decide if they will seek the peace of total surrender from the moderates, or will they seek the peace of mutual purposes, joint goals, common beliefs and shared respect?" wrote Louisiana's Clayton. Echoed Oklahoma's Glenn Brown: "Elected leaders must demonstrate their professed belief in God's word... To abuse their newfound power or to deal in petty issues would be a denial of the word they profess."

Added Jack Brymer of Florida: "No longer can the new leaders say their opinions are ignored or abused. Now they are the establishment. And as such they must endure the complaints of those who feel newly excluded. They now must prove they deserve the leadership they have won. Others will be watching closely, and cooperating cautiously."

South Carolina's John Roberts spoke to the moderates: "The biggest question... is whether the less conservative will go back to their church." (Continued on page 7)

Education Commission meets on the coast

By Tim Nicholas

In a meeting on the coast campus of William Carey College, June 30-July 1, the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission heard reports from the three college presidents and from the Board of Ministerial Education.

And during their Friday afternoon session the group, along with ex officio members, met for five hours behind closed doors to discuss a response to Neshoba and Clarke Association resolutions concerning Clarke College, and to discuss a yet undisclosed Mississippi College trustee action.

Chairman William Stewart, pastor of First Church, Eupora, declared the afternoon meeting an executive session, excluding the Baptist Record from attendance.

Discussion included response to two Baptist associations which asked the Mississippi Baptist Convention, which in turn referred the resolutions to the Commission to reconsider its decision to exclude Clarke College from administrative funding which amounts to about \$30,000 per year for the Baptist colleges.

Earlier in the decade Clarke became a campus of Mississippi College and the Education Commission has consistently held that Clarke needs to be treated as a campus of a Baptist college as are the extensions of William Carey College in New Orleans and on the Mississippi coast.

However, Clarke, which yet has a separate budget from Mississippi College, has been operating in the red for a number of years and that deficit continues to increase.

Last year, the Mississippi Baptist

Convention voted a \$55,000 line item for Clarke which at that time would have been one-fifth of its deficit. The MBC's vote did not obligate future conventions, however.

Blue Mountain College president Harold Fisher reported an increase of \$78 per semester making a unified fee for tuition and registration of \$1,470. Noting that a major concern remains faculty salaries, Fisher wrote in his report, "Our top faculty salary is approximately \$9,000 less than a public school teacher who holds a AAA certificate with 20 years of experience."

Fisher also reported razing of the Lowrey Dormitory which will be replaced with student parking.

And Mary Anderson, a former missionary to China and graduate of BMC, is giving Chinese artifacts to the school along with \$46,700 to build a suitable room adjoining the library to house the artifacts.

Mississippi College president Lewis Nobles reported the annual fund reached a total of \$1,333,420 for the 1987-88 year from 4,508 donors. This is up from \$1,277,204 last year.

And William Carey president Ralph Noonkester reviewed recent reorganization activities of the school.

Hardy Denham, president of the Board of Ministerial Education, reported plans are in place to implement an enlarged program of financial support. The new program provides for funds for qualified students planning to go into full time church related vocations. This is expanded from just aiding those planning a preaching ministry.

Help wanted!

At the present time there is a critical need for volunteers in the area of church construction. Recently the Home Mission Board notified the Mississippi Baptist Brotherhood Department that it needs more than 200 teams. Likewise there is a need for a number of teams in Mississippi projects both in state and out of

state.

Those willing to help may contact Jim Didlake, Brotherhood Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, phone 968-3800.

"We have unfilled requests from California, Oklahoma, Indiana, Ohio, or practically any state," said Didlake.

Jackson County elects Ernest Sadler as DOM

Ernest Sadler, 48, has been elected director of missions for Jackson County Baptist Association. He began his duties July 1.

Sadler, a native of Benton, goes to the association from First Church, Wiggins where he has been pastor since 1981.

Earlier pastorates include East-haven Church, Brookhaven, 1978-81; First Church, Boyle, 1972-78; Southside Church, Yazoo City, 1966-72; Cedar Creek Church, Castleberry Ala., 1964-66;

Ogden Church, Benton, 1960-63; and New Bethel Church, North Carrollton, 1959-60.

Sadler is a graduate of Mississippi College and from New Orleans Seminary he earned a bachelor of divinity, master of divinity, and doctor of ministries degree.

Sadler was on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Executive Committee when called to Jackson County. He has also been a Mississippi Baptist Seminary trustee.

Mrs. Sadler is the former Charlotte Terry of Pascagoula. They have one grown daughter.



Sadler

Convention adopts 22 resolutions

Fifty-four resolutions were submitted during the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio; and from these 54, 22 were adopted by messengers to the convention. Resolution No. 5 received the greatest amount of attention and took up the greatest amount of time in discussion. It will be presented in its entirety.

There was discussion on the first 12 resolutions. At one point during the discussion of the first 12, there was a motion to adopt all of the remaining resolutions without discussion; but this failed. Finally after discussion on 12, a motion was passed to adopt the remaining 10 without discussion.

For Resolution No. 5 the introductory "whereas" paragraphs as well as the "resolved" paragraphs will be presented. For the others, only the "resolved" portions will be printed.

Resolution No. 1 — On Prayer

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, acknowledge the absolute necessity of prayer for the spiritual well being of the church and our Convention, and effective evangelism in the world; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we encourage each Southern Baptist to pray daily for revival of the people of God in a mighty sweeping spiritual awakening; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we encourage each Southern Baptist to pray for a renewed zeal for missions and evangelism, which will issue forth in the conversion of lost sinners; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That each Southern Baptist church be challenged to establish and emphasize a ministry of prayer; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That all Southern Baptists be encouraged participate in The National Missions Prayer Plan, The National Prayer Corps (Sunday School Board), The Concerts of Prayer (Foreign Mission Board), The Prayer for Spiritual Awakening (Home Mission Board), the prayer emphases of the Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood, and to support the Bold Mission Prayer Thrust.

Resolution No. 2 — On the New Age Movement

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, acknowledge the New Age movement's aim to become a one-world religion is diametrically contrary to both New Testament Christianity and our American heritage; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we encourage our convention agencies, local associations, pastors, and church staffs to warn and educate our Baptist constituency of the deception and critical dangers of this movement.

Resolution No. 3 — On the Necessity of Salvation

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, affirm our belief in the biblical truths, that, although we agree that every person possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love, we also believe that as soon as people are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation, that is, they are lost; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm our belief in the biblical truth that salvation comes only by repentance, regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ, and that no one is saved apart from that transforming experience; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we believe that salvation is not analogous to having a positive self image or possessing self-esteem as desirable as these may be; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm our belief in the biblical truth that salvation is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm our belief in the biblical truth that all who are saved are sealed by the Holy Spirit and will never fall away from the state of grace; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm our belief in the biblical truth that those without a personal commitment to Jesus Christ will be consigned to a literal hell, the place of everlasting separation from God according to the Word of God; and

Be it therefore finally RESOLVED, That because of the aforementioned convictions that all Southern Baptists give renewed efforts to im-

plementing and supporting Bold Mission Thrust as the priority of the individual Christian, the local church, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Resolution No. 4 —

On Restoration of Trust in Local Churches

Be it RESOLVED by the 131st Convention of Southern Baptists meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, that we pledge ourselves to diligent intercessory prayer:

(1) For our local churches in conflict and in need of spiritual healing; (2) For pastors and church staff members who have been dismissed for whatever reason; (3) For the Convention's Involuntary Termination Work Group seeking to develop a strategy to educate and assist local churches and church leadership in biblical concepts of conflict resolution; and (4) For our testimony to the world that they may see Christ through our relationships.

The entirety of Resolution No. 5 is as follows:

Resolution No. 5 —

On the Priesthood of the Believer

WHEREAS, None of the five major writing systematic theologians in Southern Baptist history have given more than passing reference to the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer in this systematic theologies; and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message preamble refers to the Priesthood of the Believer, but provides no definition or content to the term; and

WHEREAS, The high profile emphasis on the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer in Southern Baptist life is a recent historical development; and

WHEREAS, The Priesthood of the Believer is a term which is subject in both misunderstanding and abuse; and

WHEREAS, The doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist; and

WHEREAS, The doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church.

Be it therefore RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, affirm its belief in the biblical doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer (1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6); and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm that this doctrine in no way gives license to misinterpret, explain away, demythologize, or extrapolate out elements of the supernatural from the Bible; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer in no way contradicts the biblical understanding of the role, responsibility, and authority of the pastor which is seen in the command to the local church in Hebrews 13:17, "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account;" and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm the truth that elders, or pastors, are called of God to lead the local church (Acts 20:28).

Resolution No. 6 —

On Homosexuality

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, deplore homosexuality as a violation and perversion of divine standards; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm the biblical injunction which declares homosexuals, like all sinners, can receive forgiveness and victory through personal faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11); and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we maintain that while God loves the homosexual and offers salvation, homosexuality is not a normal lifestyle and is an abomination in the eyes of God (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Timothy 1:8-10).

Resolution No. 7 —

On Persecution of Christians

Be it RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, express to Cox Newspapers, Inc., our outrage over the firing of a competent, highly professional Christian solely on the basis of the employee's commitment to defend traditional moral and family values; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention call upon all media to refuse advertising that promotes homosexuality or any other lifestyle that is destructive to the family.

Resolution No. 8 —

On Pro-Life Actions of SBC Agencies

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, express our appreciation to the Trustees of the Home Mission

Board, the Christian Life Commission, and the Sunday School Board; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we call upon all Southern Baptists to take an active stand in support of the sanctity of human life.

Resolution No. 9 —

On Alcohol

Be it RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 14-16, 1988, in San Antonio, Texas, express our total opposition to the advertising, manufacturing, distribution, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we support stringent laws which will both deter drinking and driving, and also ensure swift prosecution of those who are accused of such; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge Southern Baptists to work toward making these views known through secular and spiritual organizations, including local, state, and national governments; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we commend organizations which treat alcohol related problems as well as those organizations which promote prevention, usually scripturally based principles.

Resolution No. 10 —

On Exportation of Alcohol and Tobacco

Be it RESOLVED, That we encourage the United States Government to cease to assist these industries (alcohol and tobacco) via trade talks; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That Southern Baptists in their annual meeting, June 14-16, 1988, in San Antonio, Texas, declare their opposition to these hypocritical practices by the United States Government on behalf of the alcohol and tobacco industries.

Resolution No. 11 —

Encouragement to Foreign Missionaries

Be it RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, communicate to foreign missionaries that we are solidly united in our appreciation for them and our commitment to their support.

Resolution No. 12 —

On Civil Rights and Religious Institutions

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, do hereby urge all Baptist agencies and institutions to monitor closely the implementation of this Act (Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988); and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge Baptist agencies and institutions to refuse direct federal assistance, and we encourage those agencies and institutions receiving only indirect assistance to seek legal counsel about seeking exemptions under the Civil Rights Restoration Act where necessary to protect their free exercise of religion; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to amend the Act to insure that the constitutional guarantees of the free exercise of religion are not infringed; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That, until this act is amended, we call upon government officials to continue interpreting the exemption broadly so as to include those institutions indirectly controlled by religious organizations; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we request the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Public Affairs Committee of the SBC to seek this corrective legislation, in accordance with the report of the Special Fact-Finding Committee on the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, June, 1987; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we encourage all Baptists to contact members of Congress to urge them to support this legislative action.

Resolution No. 13 —

On Institutional Childcare

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, affirm that the principal responsibility of childcare is a family responsibility; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we express our concern about the need for childcare services in those regions where such services may not be available in adequate supply; especially for parents living in poverty, many of whom are single parents; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we express our belief that institutional childcare is most adequately regulated by local and state government as opposed to federal government; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we express our conviction that Congress should explore alternative such as tax incentives instead of proposing a new federal system with a regulatory role for the federal government; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge Southern Baptist churches to conduct their childcare programs as ministries of the local church or through cooperation among churches,

without financing from the federal government; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge that any program of childcare include adequate safeguards to maintain the separation of church and state; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That Southern Baptists should become informed about the details of any proposed legislation which might promise financial support for childcare services, begin aware that such subsidies are unwise and could hinder institutions from having a distinctive Christian witness.

Resolution No. 14 —

On School Based Clinics

Be it RESOLVED, That we the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, abhor the tendency to bypass parental consent involving birth control and abortion; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we deplore the operation of School Based Clinics which have as any part of their function the provision of contraceptive counseling, medications, or devices; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we do not believe that any fair interpretation of the doctrine of separation of church and state requires the public schools of our nation to adopt and maintain an amoral value-free approach to teenage promiscuity, and we call for public schools as they deal with the sensitive areas of sexual behavior to uphold the standard of sexual abstinence outside marriage; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we support those public school educators in their efforts to promote traditional moral values that teach abstinence; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That if "Just Say No" is the standard for drug education, we affirm that it is equally applicable to sex education.

Resolution No. 15 —

On Human Organ Donations

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, encourage physicians to request organ donation in appropriate circumstances; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we encourage voluntarism regarding organ donations in the spirit of stewardship, compassion for the needs of others, and alleviating suffering; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we recognize the validity of living wills and organ donor cards, along with the right of next of kin to make decisions regarding organ donations; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That nothing in the resolution be construed to condone euthanasia, infanticide, abortion, or harvesting of fetal tissue for the procurement of organs.

Resolution No. 16 —

On Ministerial Integrity

Be it RESOLVED, That we the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, pray for those in the family of God who are in positions of ministerial leadership and moral example; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we encourage the daily cultivation of a strong spiritual foundation to combat our personal tendency toward sin; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we call upon all Southern Baptists who serve in ministry-related leadership capacities to be aware constantly of the example of their lives, and to maintain biblical standards of honesty, fidelity, and integrity.

Resolution No. 17 —

On commending Bivocational Ministers

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, affirm the role of the bivocational minister as one used of God in the work of His Kingdom.

Be it further RESOLVED, That this Convention encourage Southern Baptists to provide encouragement and enhancement to bivocational ministry as we work to carry out Bold Mission Thrust; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That this Convention encourage students preparing for church-related vocations to be alert to the option of choosing a second vocation as an enabler for ministry; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That Southern Baptist churches be encouraged to consider strengthening their programs, ministry, and outreach through the use of bivocational ministers; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That the churches sponsoring new congregations be encouraged to utilize bivocational ministers to initiate new work.

Resolution No. 18 —

On Appreciation

Be it RESOLVED, That we express deep appreciation to the citizens of San Antonio for the hospitality extended to the messengers of the Convention and the extra effort made by this city to accommodate a convention of this size; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the local committees and churches for the many courtesies, services, and accommodations that have made our stay a pleasant one, and we are encouraged to pray for this great, strategic city; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we extend a special word of thanks to the news media for informative coverage of the Convention; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we commend the officers of the Convention, President Adrian P. Rogers, and Vice Presidents Jack Stanton and Victor M. Kaneubbe for their fair, knowledgeable, and patient presiding; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we also express our appreciation to Dr. Adrian P. Rogers for his gracious and Christlike spirit as he served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention this past year, highlighted by the president's address to the Convention; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we also express our appreciation to all of the heads of our Southern Baptist convention agencies for their devotion to Christ, loyalty to their tasks, and leadership in difficult times of our beloved Convention; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we commend the Committee on Order of Business for arranging and conducting an informative and challenging program; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we express our profound gratitude to all of those who have contributed so much to the enjoyment of our visit to San Antonio and the success of this, one hundred thirty-first session.

Resolution No. 19 —

On the 100th Anniversary of Christianity in the U.S.S.R.

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, applaud the heroic efforts of their Soviet brothers and sisters in Christ for their vitality, perseverance, and commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel in the Soviet Union (for 100 years); and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we encourage Premier Mikhail Gorbachev to implement his announced intention to expand the religious rights of believers and churches; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we extend the greetings and prayerful support of all Southern Baptists to our Soviet brothers and sisters in Christ through the Baptist World Alliance representatives.

Resolution No. 20 —

On the 75th Anniversary of the Polish Baptist Association of United States and Canada

Be it RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, join these fellow Southern Baptists in celebration and prayer on this occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Polish Baptist Association of United States and Canada.

Resolution No. 21 —

On The Family

Be it RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in annual session June 14-16, 1988, go on record as affirming the importance of the home as the center for Christian nurture, training, and instruction (Proverbs 22:6) and

Be it further RESOLVED, That Christian education in the church regarding biblical standards and moral values be supported by teaching and example in the home;

Be it further RESOLVED, That Southern Baptists express our appreciation for those organizations and ministries which uphold the standards of God concerning proper moral and family values; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we believe that devotion to God, respect for authority, obedience to divine commands, self-discipline, self-control, and love be both modeled and taught (1 Timothy 1:5) in the home.

Resolution No. 22 —

On Soviet Involvement in American Education

Be it RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio, June 14-16, 1988, encourage messengers to contact our elected officials and request a full explanation of the implementation of this agreement (exchange of curricula and teaching material with Russia) and the implications thereof.

Pro-life bill sent to Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A ban on the use of federal funds for abortion would be extended to all federal agencies and all federal funds under the "President's Pro-Life Act of 1988," sent to Congress by the President on June 8.

Vines issues statement of commitment

By Dan Martin

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Jerry Vines, newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has issued a statement of commitment to Southern Baptists.

In issuing the statement Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., told Baptist Press, the news service of the SBC, he intends to periodically issue statements of purpose and "proposals for reconciliation."

He added he is aware such statements from the SBC president have not been done before, but said he believes the time has come to begin to heal some of the hurts of the SBC, which has been torn by strife for nearly a decade.

In the statement, Vines asks Baptists to renew their commitment to the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget, to reach out to one another, and to prepare for the 1989 annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., where evangelistic activities will precede the convention.

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention," Vines writes in his statement. "Already, I am aware of the tremendous prayer support on my behalf over the length and breadth of our convention."

"I commit myself to the Lord and to you."

"My convictions concerning the Bible are widely known. My desire is

that the spirit with which I hold and share these convictions will become equally well known."

Vines continues: "In the coming weeks and months, I will be periodically sharing with you statements and proposals for reconciliation. Many have expressed to me the desire that I may be used of God to heal hurts in our fellowship. I am committed to do what one man can do."

"I sincerely ask you to join me in some additional commitments."

"First, let us all renew our commitment to voluntary giving to missions through our Cooperative Program."

"Second, let us all begin to reach out to one another in 'speech, always with grace, seasoned with salt' (Colossians 4:6)."

"Third, let us prepare to involve ourselves in the exciting witnessing opportunities next year in Las Vegas and commit ourselves again to personal witnessing in our 'Jerusalem.'"

"No man can bring about healing. The Bible says, 'I am the Lord that healeth thee,' (Exodus 15:26). But I do commit myself to be one of the many 'beloved physicians' working under the direction of the Great Physician."

Dan Martin is BP news editor.

Rogers, Gregory on videotape

NASHVILLE (BP) — Videotapes of addresses by Adrian P. Rogers and Joel Gregory to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting this summer are available from the Baptist Telecommunication Network.

Rogers, who ended his term as SBC president during the annual meeting June 14-16 in San Antonio, Texas, delivered the annual president's address.

Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, preached the convention sermon.

The tapes of each message cost \$24.95 and may be ordered through the Sunday School Board's toll-free telephone number, 1-800-458-BSSB.

Alliance schedules session to listen

The Southern Baptist Alliance has scheduled a "listening session" for Sept. 8-10 at Woodmont Church, Nashville.

The format is yet to be decided, says the SBA president, John Thomason of Jackson. "My guess is we will continue to explore ways of supporting organizations threatened by this takeover movement."

Thomason, pastor of Jackson's Northminster Church, in an interview, said the important issue for the Alliance to resolve is "how can we hold to the values of loyalty and integrity?"

He said that moderates are wanting

to be loyal to the denomination, "yet wanting to hold fast to our integrity. How long can we support institutions that are becoming more and more unsupportable?" he asked.

Thomason said another purpose of the convocation will be to reach out to other moderates and "demonstrate that the Southern Baptist Alliance is not an elitist or extremist group."

Since the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio where the conservative candidate Jerry Vines won election as president, Thomason said there has been a "flood" of calls and letters from people looking to the Alliance for leadership.

Controversy Capsules

Compiled by Tim Nicholas

This occasional column continues with a few controversy-related items. The Baptist Record will usually have more voluminous accounts on hand.

AAUP honors SEBTS

The American Association of University Professors has given awards to Southeastern Seminary's association chapter and to the seminary's former president Randall Lolley for "outstanding contributions to academic freedom."

The chapter is being honored because, according to Dennis Marks, chairman of the AAUP membership committee, it "has provided a reasoned and principled course for the seminary's faculty, students, alumni, and all who would resist the erosion of academic freedom."

Matthew Finkin, chairman of the AAUP committee on academic freedom and tenure, said that Lolley, now pastor of First Church, Raleigh, "wrote the words that summarize it best: 'The ultimate issue in all this, my friends, is freedom — free consciences, free churches, and free classrooms.'"

Lolley resigned when he did not want to implement changes trustees wanted that would have taken power away from faculty.

Elder urges consensus

Sunday School Board President

Missionaries' son dies in Prentiss

David Lay, 16, son of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, Frank and Margaret Lay, died June 29 near Prentiss.

The Lays were visiting in Margaret's hometown on a brief furlough from duties in San Jose, Costa Rica. Frank is an English language pastor there.

The Lays were appointed in 1984 and commissioned by the Foreign Mission Board at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum. Frank had been pastor of Handsboro Church, Gulfport, when appointed.

Besides his parents, David is survived by his sister, Rebecca Elizabeth, 10.

David was buried at Antioch Baptist Church, east of Prentiss where Margaret was once a member and where her mother now goes.

The Lays may be reached at the Prentiss Church missionary residence, Box 297, Prentiss, MS 39474, phone 792-2339.

Lloyd Elder told new trustees at orientation that if unanimity is not possible, Southern Baptists should build a Christian fellowship of consensus.

Concerning the SBC-passed resolution concerning priesthood of the believer, Elder said the doctrine "expresses the freedom and responsibility of every believer without human interference. And the doctrine affirms the gifts, callings, and ministry of every believer to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord."

He added, "This doctrine undergirds and affirms the biblical undershepherd, servant role, responsibility and authority of the pastor in the midst of the congregation. It does not abrogate the accountability of the convention agencies' employees to perform their responsibilities within the doctrinal guideline of the Baptist Faith and Message."

Thelma Grissett dies of heart attack at home

Thelma Grissett, 52, wife of Ray Grissett of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board staff, died July 2 at their home in Hattiesburg of a heart attack.

She owned two Merle Norman Studios. Ray Grissett is director of the MBCB's Cooperative Missions Department.

Mrs. Grissett was a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and was a member of Main Street Church, Hattiesburg.

Besides her husband, she is survived by two daughters, Jayne, a graduate student at Mississippi State University, and Michal, a student at Samford University, her mother, Mrs. Thelma L. Saucier, Hattiesburg; and two brothers.

She was buried at Forrest Memorial Gardens in Petal.

The family requested that any memorials be sent to the Jerry Ray Grissett fund with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation or for Gideon Bibles.

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MC sets childhood education workshop

The 20th Early Childhood Education Workshop has been scheduled at Mississippi College for July 18-22, according to Betty Coward, workshop director and head of the Home Economics Department.

Theme for the week will be "Doing What is Best for Children Today." Sessions will focus on day care administration and curriculum, the child in school settings, health concerns of children, what teachers need to know about child abuse, curriculum development for age groups from babies through five-year-olds, and personal and professional development for persons who work with young children.

The workshop is designed for undergraduate and graduate students who wish to earn credit, kindergarten teachers and coordinators, elementary teachers and principals, preschool teachers, day care administrators, and church education directors and staff. It is approved for 27 hours of continuing education for members of the American Home Economics Association.

All participants (for non-credit or credit) and asked to pre-register. For information, contact the Office of Continuing Education, Box 4185, Mississippi College, Clinton, MS 39058, or telephone (601) 925-3301.

Mississippi Baptists give third highest total

Mississippi Baptists gave their third highest total monthly gift through the Cooperative Program in June, according to Earl Kelly, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The total was \$1,804,511. The only months with higher giving amounts were January of 1986 with \$1,944,314; and January of 1985 with \$1,904,875.

Total giving for 1988 thus far is \$9,434,410, which is only slightly under the pro rata amount needed if the budget giving were done in 12 equal increments. The pro rata amount for January through June would be \$9,457,500. Total giving is only \$23,090 short of that.

The 1988 budget, voted at the 1987 Mississippi Baptist Convention, is \$18,915,000.

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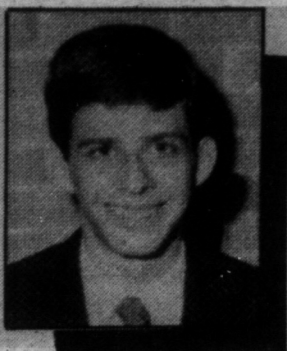
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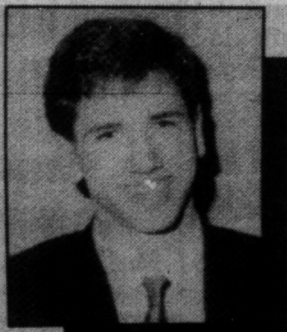
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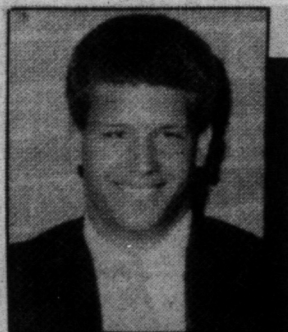
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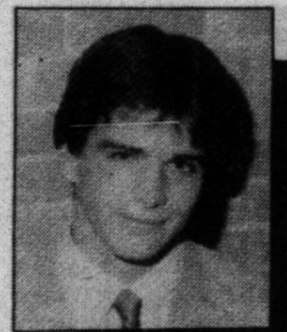
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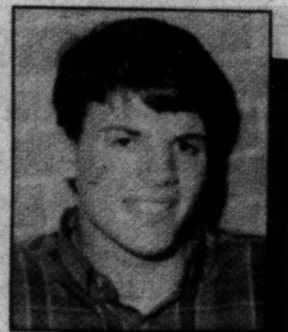
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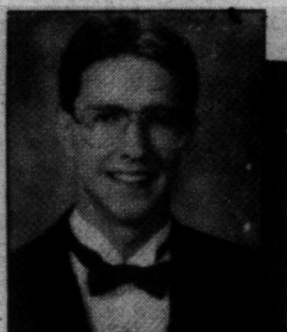
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Missionary faces firing

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A Southern Baptist foreign missionary has been asked to resign because of what was termed a lack of clarity in his views concerning the deity, miracles, and physical resurrection of Christ.

Michael E. Willett, who is in language study in Costa Rica and was appointed as a seminary teacher for Venezuela, "did not present a strong positive statement of the gospel," reported J. Bryan Brasington, director of Southern Baptist work in Spanish-speaking South America, after meeting with the missionary in mid-June.

Brasington said the missionary was "hesitant to say Jesus was the Son of God... not positive that all the miracles in the Bible occurred" and hesitant to say that Jesus was resurrected physically.

Willett submitted his resignation June 18 but rescinded it in a July 7 telephone call to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

In a telephone interview July 6, Willett said an article he wrote supporting women in ministry was the

focus of the meeting with Brasington.

He said he was told a number of Foreign Mission Board trustees began demanding his resignation after the

article appeared in the April issue of *SBC Today*, an independent newspaper affiliated with Southern (Continued on page 8)



Joe Stacker, right, of the Sunday School Board's Church Administration Department, congratulates Mrs. Ben Yarber at Ridgecrest, where Yarber received an award from the Sunday School Board for being named one of the two small church pastors of the year in the Southern Baptist Convention. Yarber and the couple's daughter, Angela, 16, are also in the picture.

Baptists still divided, editors agree

(Continued from page 3)

ches and continue vigorous denominational involvement and strong support of the Cooperative Program (convention budget). If so, we will remain a vital denomination with a strong majority-minority relationship. Short of this, the denominational troubles grow greater."

J.B. Fowler of New Mexico wrote to new President Vines, whom he quoted as saying, "I want to do the right thing and do it in the right way." Fowler

said: "Doing the right thing in the right way will surely include involving loyal Southern Baptists from the broad spectrum of the SBC in convention activities... Brother president, do the right thing in the right way, and we will long remember you and your noble example."

"There is nothing of God in this sad situation; it is full of evil and human machinations rather than the Spirit of Christ," said North Carolina's

Puckett. "If there is a solution, there is only one. Good and decent people from both groups must confront the evil which has taken over the denomination."

"There is hope," countered James Watters of the Northwest. "And Richard Jackson said it best in his press conference immediately following his defeated candidacy for president, 'Don't panic, and don't give up on the Southern Baptist Convention.'"

Editors praise Gregory sermon

(Continued from page 2)

Priesthood of the Believer." The resolution had been approved by about a 10 percent margin after attempts failed to substitute, amend and refer it to the convention's Executive Committee.

The resolution's four principles affirm belief in the priesthood of the believer; state the doctrine "in no way gives license to misinterpret, explain away, demythologize or extrapolate out elements of the supernatural from the Bible"; note that the doctrine "in no way contradicts the biblical understanding of the role, responsibility and authority of the pastor"; and affirm that "elders, or pastors, are called of God to lead the local church."

"The most unfortunate action of the convention, from my point of view, was approval of the resolution on the priesthood of the believer," wrote Bill Webb of Illinois. "The resolution claims to affirm the doctrine, but instead virtually undermines it with a series of disclaimers."

Webb was echoed by Virginia's Julian Pentecost, who said the priesthood statement should get "this

year's award for most abominable resolution."

Puckett called it "nothing short of pure heresy to a genuine Baptist," and South Carolina's John Roberts said it "represents a basic departure and new concept of who we are as Baptists."

Roberts wrote: "A scant 200 years ago, Baptists were publicly whipped and locked in prison for insisting on the right to read the Bible for themselves, for refusing to submit to clergy in any matter of conscience or belief. We became known as a priesthood of believers, a distinction that has been a source of pride and comfort to many Baptists. Resolution Five would change all that."

Several editors disputed the resolution's claim that the doctrine does not have strong roots in church and Baptist history. Puckett cited Baptist theologians B.H. Carroll and E.Y. Mullins. Pentecost cited Jesus and the Apostle Paul, as well as Mullins and Baptist forebears George W. Truett, Isaac Backus, John Leland, Roger Williams, Thomas Helwys, and John Smyth.

Editors also cited Scripture

references that, they said, support their positions: I Peter 2:5 and 9; Exodus 9:4-6 and 19:3-6; and Revelation 1:5-6, 5:9-10 and 20:6. "It is beyond our understanding how people who claim to be deeply committed to the Bible and its message could support a resolution so contrary to the spirit and substance of biblical revelation," Pentecost said.

"The resolution as adopted is a mockery of the New Testament's repeated emphasis on the equality of all believers in Christ and the right and responsibility of each believer to deal directly with God for himself."

"Some churches mistreat their pastors, and that is patently wrong, but the solution to abuse does not rest in a pastor becoming a bishop, cardinal or pope," said Puckett. He charged: "Present denominational leadership want to establish the body of beliefs at the national level and have them implemented through authoritarian pastors at the local church level. Such an approach is vintage Roman Catholicism. You can't be a Baptist and believe that."

Thursday, July 14, 1988

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

Ben Yarber credits church with success pattern

By Don McGregor

Ben Yarber, pastor of Canaan Church, Columbus, is one of two small church pastors of the year in the

Southern Baptist Convention. Yarber was chosen small church pastor of the year for the area east of the Mississippi River and was honored late in June at Ridgecrest by the

Sunday School Board's Church Administration Department.

He was honored again this week at Gulfshore for being one of two small church pastors of the year in Mississippi. The other honoree, mentioned in the June 29 issue of the *Baptist Record*, was John Sharp, pastor of Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol.

In each case, nominations were made by directors of missions in each association; and the two Mississippi honorees were selected by the Mississippi Baptist Church Administration Department from many applications.

Yarber has been pastor of Canaan Church since Oct. 1, 1985. The statistics tell the story. When he arrived, the Sunday School attendance average was 41, and the average for the morning-worship attendance was 65. The Sunday School now has an average attendance of 128, and the worship service attendance is now averaging about 300. Budget receipts for 1985 were \$36,856. The annual budget is now more than \$100,000.

There have been 235 additions since Yarber became the pastor. Baptisms have accounted for 100 of these. That leaves 135 additions by letter.

Canaan is Yarber's second church. He was at Artesia Church near Starkville for 5½ years before going to Canaan. Before that he was in evangelism for two years.

Canaan, however, is his first full-time pastorate. He was a bi-vocational pastor at Artesia and was involved in radio for the other part of his vocation. He was active in broadcasting, sales, and programming. He says he was a disk jockey for most of his life.

Yarber was saved in 1967. He is from Franklin County in Alabama but was a deacon at Immanuel Church, Columbus, when he felt a "pronounced" call to the ministry. He said that he didn't want to put himself into the Lord's hands, so he didn't make a commitment to go into the ministry. He added that he didn't feel qualified; but, nevertheless, he couldn't sleep at night and got no rest. It was not until he surrendered to the ministry in 1978 that peace came, he said.

In 1983 Yarber enrolled in the seminary extension program and will finish his courses this year with a college level education. He has completed 13 of 16 courses and will finish the others this year. He attended the courses at the center in Columbus at night. He is director of the center now and has 14 students enrolled. Some are pastors and some are lay people, he noted.

He was married and had two

children when he surrendered to the ministry. His son is now a student at New Orleans Seminary, and his daughter is 16 years of age.

The church was established in 1960; but J. C. Mitchell, in making the recommendation, said that it had almost ceased to be a Southern Baptist church. It was not giving to missions through the Cooperative Program and was not contributing to associational missions. It was not using Southern Baptist literature. There was no Church Training, no Brotherhood, and no Woman's Missionary Union or other missions organizations.

Since Yarber has been the pastor the church has initiated Church Training and has organized a Woman's Missionary Union, a Brotherhood, and missions organizations for children and youth. Also Southern Baptist literature is used throughout the Sunday School.

The church now gives 10 percent to missions. It contributes regularly through the Cooperative Program and to associational missions. It participates in all of the special missions offerings.

Numerical success for Canaan Church has necessitated more space. In May the church dedicated a 625-seat auditorium. The building, the pews, and additional parking space was purchased for \$450,000. The 54 by 172-foot building added also new offices, a new choir room, and 17 new classrooms. The church now has a children's worship service and has purchased a bus and a van. Members are coming from the eastern area of Columbus, where the church is located, and even from Alabama. It is about eight miles to the state line, and some members are driving 12 miles or so to attend services.

"The church deserves the credit for the success," Yarber said. He added that he has never seen a church more willing to go after prospects. "I've got a lot of good help," he said. "I believe there is a resurgence and interest in winning people to the Lord," he said.

"I believe in the Great Commission," he declared. I believe you have to go after the prospects and the lost. We have an active visitation program and good, strong, committed people who are willing to help."

Yarber said that he is proud of the Southern Baptist Convention. He credits the Probe Program with giving the church a shot in the arm and helping to determine who its members are socially and economically. He saw the church as it was and said he zeroed in on its category and potential.

"The Southern Baptist Convention has helps," he said. "It is the most evangelistic and most mission minded of any denomination."

He said that he couldn't have accomplished the task without help.

Mitchell said that beyond the statistical evidence of pastoral excellence, Yarber also "reflects a spirit of service and participation."

He is small church pastor of the year among Southern Baptists for the eastern half of the United States.

Just for the Record

New missionary faces firing

(Continued from page 7)

Baptist Convention moderates.

The board will act on Willett's status as a missionary during its July 19-21 meeting at Glorieta, N.M. Willett is a native of Independence, Mo., and a 1985 doctor of philosophy graduate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He also taught there during parts of 1983 and 1984. He was an instructor at William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., during 1985 and an adjunct professor at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., during 1986.

He was appointed a missionary in April 1987, began language studies four months later and was scheduled to move to Venezuela in August.

In his now-rescinded letter of resignation, Willett expressed regret that the Foreign Mission Board "could not support me" in light of his article, "Opposition to women is unforgivable sin."

Brasington, however, wrote back to Willett to reiterate that doctrinal issues, not the article, were the primary reason for requesting his resignation.

Brasington acknowledged the article did raise questions among a number of the board's trustees. In a telephone interview, Brasington said his own view of the article is that it unfairly accuses people on one side of a controversial issue of committing the unpardonable sin. In the ongoing strife among Southern Baptists, he said, "Everybody could be and should be forgiven in order to bring about peace in the convention."

Don Kammerdiener, board vice president for the Americas, also said concern existed among several trustees over the article. But no organized effort to fire Willett was evident when trustees met in June in San Antonio, Texas, Kammerdiener said.

Brasington, in a meeting with Willett, said he did not debate the missionary's theology but did inform him that his views would not be acceptable in seminary settings in Spanish-speaking South America. A Southern Baptist missionary who teaches in a Baptist seminary in another South American country also participated in the dialogue.

"The Foreign Mission Board has historically expected missionaries to be able to give a clear statement regarding the fundamentals of the gospel, including the deity, miracles, and resurrection of Christ," said Kammerdiener.

Willett said he agrees with historic

church teaching that "Jesus is God and man, divine and human." He affirmed "the tradition of Jesus as a miracle worker, as a healer, as an exorcist." But he noted "the possibility that some miracle stories were expanded, perhaps even created in the early church as the gospel was proclaimed." The miracle stories he questions "are a small number compared to those I accept," he said.

Jesus, in his resurrection, "was transformed into a new level of existence with God. To say that (Jesus') spiritual body has flesh and bones like you and I have is to reduce the resurrection to a resuscitation," Willett said.

He described his views as "consistent with the mainstream of Christian scholarship." He added: "If only the inerrantist position is going to be acceptable on the foreign mission field, that needs to be stated."

"I am deeply saddened and hurt, because I feel that the work to which God has called me has been taken from me."

Concerns about Willett's theological views surfaced after various conversations with fellow missionaries in Costa Rica, Kammerdiener said. One of Willett's fellow missionaries wrote a letter to a friend in the United States expressing concern about Willett's doctrinal views. The letter received some circulation before being forwarded to Board President R. Keith Parks.

In interviews and written documents prior to his appointment as a missionary, Willett's theological statements were considered consistent with Foreign Mission Board standards, Kammerdiener noted, and were approved by the staff and trustees of the board.

In his letter to Willett, Brasington noted, "I think you realize that if you had expressed these same doubts in your doctrinal statement prior to appointment, you would not have been approved for appointment."

Art Toalston writes for the Foreign Mission Board.

Revival dates

Causeyville: July 17-22. Sunday regular times; 7:30 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; evangelist, John Edwards; pastor of Union Church, Clarke County; music led by Wendy Boldin, Causeyville's summer music and youth director; Don Womble, pastor.

Mississippi Baptist activities

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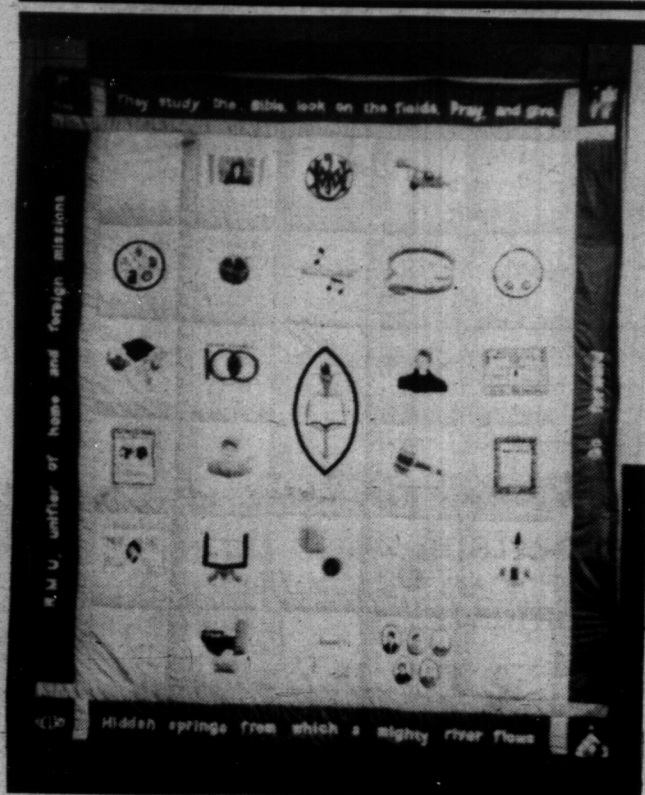
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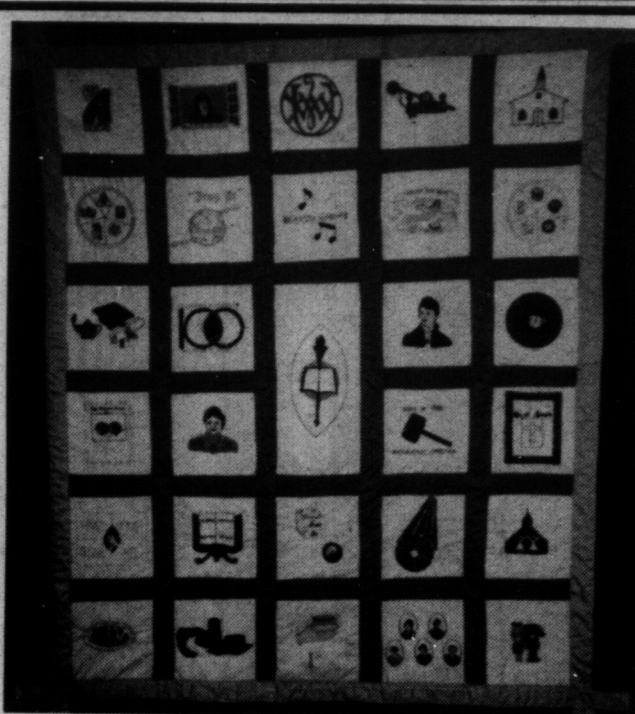
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Roxie Church WMU celebrated the national WMU centennial by completing a quilt, made mostly by Mrs. Ruby Smith. A centennial birthday cake was made by Mrs. Kay Pollard.



A WMU centennial quilt was made by Mrs. Ada Lee Jones and her granddaughter, Leigh Ann Duncan. Mrs. Jones served as centennial chairman for the Holly Church, Alcorn Association. The quilt was displayed at the Alcorn Association celebration on May 19 and at the Holly Church celebration on May 22.



Sunrise Church, Leake County, celebrated its 100th birthday of WMU on May 14. Mrs. Wanda Johnston was centennial chairman.

Pictured are four generations of the Jones family that participated in the centennial, left to right, Mrs. Maggie Jones, her daughter, Edna Earl Jones, granddaughter, Colene McNair, great granddaughter, Colene McNair, great granddaughters, Lori and Lana Rogers, daughter, Frances Rogers, WMU director, and granddaughter-in-law, Penny Rogers. Not pictured, Susan Kinton, granddaughter.



At the Clay County W.M.U. centennial celebration, held at First Church, West Point, on May 17, Mrs. Cindy Pelphrey (left), Columbus, associate coordinator for Area IV, gave the challenge for the future. Also participating in the program were the representatives from Clay County to the national celebration in Richmond: Mrs. Louise Hill (second from left), county WMU representative; Mrs. Omera Dodson, representing First Church, West Point; and Lola Pruett, representing West End Church. The centennial quilt in the background, a featured part of the program, was made by members of Baptist Women at First Church.

Carmel Church, Monticello, Lawrence Association, will be having Vacation Bible School, July 18-22. Preschoolers and children will meet each day from 8:30-11:30 a.m. with the youth meeting at 6:30-8:30 p.m. The church bus will run. Parents Night will be July 22, 7:30 p.m. Sammy McDonald is pastor.

Yazoo City will honor Jerry Clower

First Church, Yazoo City, has set July 17 as a day to say "thank you" to Jerry Clower and his wife, Homerline. The Clowers, members of that church for 30 years, plan to move to a new house in his home county, Amite County.

There will be special recognition of the Clowers at the 11 a.m. service on July 17. That afternoon between 3 and 5, the church will host a reception in their honor, in the Church Activities Building. The reception is open to the public.

Mt. Zion (Pike) will celebrate 150th

Mt. Zion Church, near Osyka in Pike County, will celebrate its 150th anniversary on July 24.

Tom Sumrall Jr., former pastor, will deliver the 11 a.m. message. Billy Ray Simmons, former pastor, will lead the singing. Dinner in Fellowship Hall will follow the morning service. Afterward, former pastors will speak. There will be no night service. Dale Sheridan is the pastor.

Second, Greenville to mark 50th

Second Church, Greenville, will celebrate its 50th Anniversary on July 24. Second Church was organized in July, 1938, as a mission of First Church, Greenville.

The celebration will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m. Bob Connerly is pastor.

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Staff changes

Oak Hill Church, Poplarville, recently called **Grover C. Glenn III**, 37, as pastor.



Glenn

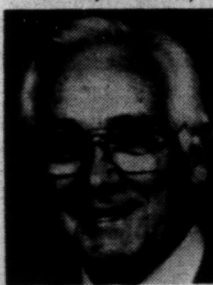
He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Grover C. Glenn Jr. of Greenville and is married to the former Debra Horton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Horton of Leland. They have two children, Cameron, 6, and Meredith, 5.

Glenn goes from the pastorate of First Church, Head of Island, La. He also served as pastor of Galilee Church in Georgetown.

He is a graduate of Mississippi College and recently received the master of divinity degree and will begin work on his doctorate at New Orleans Seminary this fall.

Grover was licensed and ordained by Emmanuel Church in Greenville.

Justus (Jut) Garrett retired May 31 from the active pastorate of Parkway Church, Macon, Ga.



Garrett

A native of Okaloosa, Fla., Garrett pastored Georgia churches for 17 years. He also served 17 years in Mississippi. He was interned at First Church, Hattiesburg, and served as pastor of Temple, Petal, and Emmanuel, Biloxi.

Garrett is married to the former Janis Hanson of Jamestown, N.Y. They plan to continue living in Macon where he plans to do interim and supply work.

Ralph Culp has resigned as pastor of Central Church (Tishomingo Association) to become pastor of East Corinth Church (Alcorn Association).

Ronald C. McLain, a native of Richton, has been called as associate pastor of Blue Lake Church in Chipley, Fla. A student at Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, Fla., he is majoring in theology.

He and his wife, Renee, have two children, Rebecca and Karen.

Wayne Fults has recently become pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church of Rock Springs, Wyo. He moved there from having served five years as a home missionary in Blanding, Utah. Previously, he served in Mississippi churches in Doddsville, Anguilla, Louisville, and Columbus. His wife is the former Marcia Mitchell from Pontotoc.

Emmanuel Church is a new church start that was previously served by John Alexander and his wife, Helen, former stewardship director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

The Fults family may be contacted at P. O. Box 2108, Rock Springs, WY 82902.

Easthaven Church, Brookhaven has called **Phillip Turner** as minister of youth, effective June 12. He goes from Lincoln St. Church, Portland, Oregon, where he served as interim music and education.

Turner is a native of Jackson, Tenn. and holds a bachelor of music degree and a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Seminary.

Russell McIntire, Clinton, is serving McLaurin Heights Church as interim pastor, effective June 12. McIntire previously served as pastor at First Church, Clinton, Oak Park Church, New Orleans, La., vice-president of development for New Orleans Seminary, and presently serves in development for Mississippi College on a part-time basis.



McIntire

On June 20 Barry Grantham of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, began serving McLaurin Heights as interim minister of youth and activities. Grantham will be entering seminary in January, 1989.

Cowan Road Church, Gulfport, has called **J. Merrick Henry** to serve as pastor, effective July 10. Henry goes from First Church in Melville, La.

New Prospect Church, Lincoln County, has called **Randall Walker** as pastor. He moved there from Carson Church.

Mt. Zion Church, Pike County, has a new pastor, **Dale Sheridan**. He and his wife, Shirley, are both from Murray, Ky. He is a student at New Orleans Seminary. Before going to Mt. Zion, he was pastor at Shady Grove Church, Paris, Tenn. The Sheridans have a son, Tyler, 2.

Southern Hills Church, Jackson, has called **John Cockrell** as pastor, effective June 5. Cockrell is only the second pastor in the history of the church. He follows David T. Cranford, the former pastor of 22 years. Cockrell is a graduate of Mississippi College with a B.A. degree, and Southwestern Seminary with a master of divinity degree. He is married to the former Pam Roark of Jackson. They have four children, Sarah, Kelli, Chad, and Shane. The Cockrells are going from Three Way Church in Maple, Tex.



Cockrell

Southern Hills Church hosted a reception in honor of the Cockrells, June 12, at 8 p.m.

James B. (Buddy) McElroy has accepted the call to Harmony Church, Laurel, as minister of music, youth and activities, effective July 3. He goes from State Boulevard Church, Meridian. He has held positions as music director in churches in Mississippi and choral director, teacher, professor of voice and conducting at Clarke College.

D. J. Omarkhail has accepted the call of summer minister of youth and children at Wellman Church (Lincoln County). He is a 1988 graduate of Mississippi College and was born and reared in Yazoo City. He plans to attend Golden Gate Seminary and later enter the foreign mission field.

David Webb is new youth and education minister at Union Church, Picayune. He returned to Mississippi from Potosi Church in Missouri where he was youth and bus minister. He is a native of Forrest and is a graduate of MSU and Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife Lisa have a daughter, Ashley, 10 months.

First Church of Louise has called **Maynard Hill** as its interim pastor. He was licensed for the ministry by Moorhead Church.

Mt. Zion Church, Pike County, has a new pastor, **Dale Sheridan**. He and his wife, Shirley, are both from Murray, Ky. He is a student at New Orleans Seminary. Before going to Mt. Zion, he was pastor at Shady Grove Church, Paris, Tenn. The Sheridans have a son, Tyler, 2.

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Retired pastor; Bill Day, dies

W. L. (Bill) Day, 88, retired pastor, died June 26 in Memphis. Graveside services were held June 29 at Rose Hill Cemetery, Brookhaven. Day was born at Wesson Feb. 12, 1900, and grew up at Brookhaven.



Day

Day's pastorates included First, Collins; First, Pascagoula; Beacon Street, Philadelphia; Calvary, Tupelo; First, Louisville; Fairview, Indianola; and Enon (Winston). He had retired in 1974, moved to Louisville, and from thence to a retirement home near Nashville.

He served as minister of education in Texas churches and at First, Jackson, before entering the pastorate.

His wife preceded him in death in 1983. Other survivors include his son and two brothers, Scheumann Day of Brookhaven and Wesley Day of Bay Town, Texas.

Day, a graduate of Millsaps College, studied at Southwestern Seminary. He had served as a member of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and of its Executive Committee. The Mississippi Baptist Convention elected him as vice president in 1956 and 1957.

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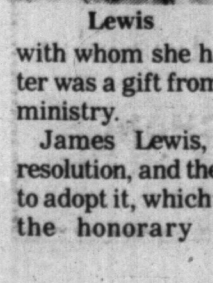
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Organist closes 40-year stint at Fifteenth Avenue, Meridian

Cecilie Lewis on June 26 ended her 40-year tenure as organist of Fifteenth Avenue Church, Meridian. In a recognition service, **Bradley E. Jones**, minister of music, presented her a certificate of appreciation from the state Church Music Department and an album of letters from 23 staff members with whom she has worked. The latter was a gift from the church's music ministry.



Lewis

James Lewis, pastor, recited a resolution, and the congregation voted to adopt it, which granted Mrs. Lewis the honorary title of organist

emeritus. The pastor then led in an unveiling of the organist's portrait, which will be placed in the church's Heritage Hill.

Mrs. Lewis joined the Fifteenth Avenue staff in May, 1948, when she told Pastor Paul Horner she would "stay 'til they could get someone." In 1963, when A. O. Collins was pastor, the church moved into a new sanctuary and got a new Kilgen Pipe Organ.

"We will all learn and grow from her everlasting demonstration of endurance and dedication through good times and bad, through discouragement and joy," one member stated.

On the evening of June 26, Mrs. Lewis was honored with a city-wide reception and presented a silver tea set as a gift from the church.

Revival dates

Wayside, Vicksburg: July 17-20; Robin Jumper, pastor, Wellman, Bogue Chitto, evangelist; Bill Britton, minister of music at Woodlawn, Vicksburg, music evangelist; services, 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.; regular scheduled services Sunday; Michael Weeks, pastor.

Harmony (Smith): July 17-22; 11 a.m.; dinner on grounds, 1:30; no Sunday night services; 7 nightly; Glen Jennings, evangelist; Steve Sullivan, music director; Ray Moseley, pastor.

Mt. Zion (Rankin): July 17-22; Sunday, 11 a.m.; lunch and afternoon service; Mon.-Fri., 7:30 nightly; Julius Thompson, evangelist; Richard and Pam Sparks, music; Tommy Bufkin, pastor.

Oak Hill, Poplarville: pastor led revival; July 17-22; Grover Glenn, pastor, conducting services; Charles Powell, interim minister of music, music; services, 7 p.m. nightly; dinner served July 17.

Malmalson: July 17-22; 7:30 each evening; Bernette Fielder, speaker.

White Oak, Magee: July 17-22; Harvey Webb, pastor, First, Canton; evangelist; James W. Beasley, minister of music, First, Crystal Springs, music; Sunday services, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; lunch served at noon hour; Mon.-Fri., 7:30 each evening; James C. Edwards, pastor.

Faith, Silver Creek: July 17-22; Jack Turner, Columbia, pastor, Faith, preaching; Jim Walker, Columbia, music; Sun., 11 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall, noon; Sun., worship service, 7 p.m.; services, Mon.-Fri., 7:45 p.m.

Shiloh (Montgomery): July 17-20; Sunday, 11 a.m.; 7:30 nightly; Richard Mormon, preaching; Frank Roberson, pastor.

Grace Chapel, Brooklyn: July 17-22; Sunday morning services followed with dinner on the grounds; afternoon service, 1 p.m.; week nights, 7 p.m.; Earl Rush, evangelist; Billy Smith, music; Frank C. Rice, pastor.

Sunrise, Carthage: July 17-22; Eddie Pilgrim, evangelist; H. Frank Smith, pastor; services, 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Linn, Doddsville: July 17-22; 7:30 nightly; Jerry Swimmer, full time evangelist, Iuka, evangelist; Mark Manning, music; Jimmy McLendon, pastor.

Ebenezer (Holmes): July 17-20; homecoming, July 17, Mac Massey, former pastor, preaching; revival, Kenneth Moore, Enon, evangelist; Robert Robertson, Sallis, music director; Billy Barron, pastor.

Sartartia, Sartartia: July 17-22; July 17, homecoming; services, 7 each evening; Harold Jordan, Vicksburg, preaching for homecoming and revival; Mrs. Barbara Hicks, pianist; Mrs. Wanda Woods, song leader; Douglas McDonald, pastor.

McCool, McCool: July 17-22; Sunday, covered dish lunch after 11 a.m. service; evening services, 7; Danny Berry, Jackson, evangelist; Tony and Ginger McDaniel, music; James Lee Bailey, pastor.

Mission Hill (Lincoln): homecoming and revival, July 17-22; Sunday services, Sunday School, 10 a.m. worship service, 11 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall; afternoon service, 1:15 p.m.; services, Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Mack Amis, evangelist; Mrs. Trudy Givens, music; Jim Henson, pastor.

Vanilla, Monticello: July 17-22; Bob Goolsby, Hepzibah, (Lawrence), evangelist; Shelby Jean Boutwell, music; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; 7:30 each night; Jody Lightsey, pastor.

Mt. Olivet (Scott): July 17-20; homecoming, July 17, services, 11 a.m., dinner, picnic-style, afterwards; 7:30 nightly; Travis Polk, evangelist.

Union (Rankin): July 17-22; 7:30 nightly; T. W. Henderson, evangelist; Vernell Daniels, pastor.

Ted, Baysprings: homecoming, July 17; revival, July 18-20; Sunday; 11 a.m.; Scott Walters, preaching; lunch in fellowship hall, brief history, and singing; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; preaching, Mon., Clyde Little; Tues., Ed Holloman; Wed., Steve Pouncey; Keith Bogan, pastor.

Sylvarena Church, Wesson: July 17-20; Marion Payne, Tupelo, evangelist; Dexter Griggs, Tupelo, leading music; Donald Payne, pastor; 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily.

Names in the news

Mera Harriet Hall of Clinton, a violinist, was presented in guest recital at Mississippi College's Aven Auditorium, July 12, at 8 p.m. The public is invited and admission is free.

Miss Hall, the daughter of Mrs. Mera C. Hall of Clinton and the late Dan C. Hall, who served from 1964-1987 as director of the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, is pursuing the master of music degree at Baylor university.

W. D. Stogner, 67, of Bossier City, La., died June 23 at his home. Native of Tylertown, Miss., he had been pastor of Southside Church, Sulphur, La.; pastor of Waller Church, Bossier City (21 years); and director of missions for the Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association (1972-1982). Funeral services were held June 25 at Waller Church.

Stogner was ordained by New Zion Church, Tylertown, in 1942. He was graduated from Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He had served on several committees of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Survivors include his wife, Miriam, and two daughters, and two grandchildren.



ATLANTA — Gordon and Dorothy Shamburger of Jackson attended the spring orientation and endorsing service for chaplains sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Shamburger is a Southern Baptist chaplain at the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center. He and his wife were among 28 chaplains and spouses endorsed in a service at Trinity Baptist Church in Conyers, Ga.

The chaplaincy division of the Home Mission Board provides resources and support for more than 1,900 endorsed chaplains in military, hospitals, institutional, business, and industrial settings.

John Laughlin, Meridian music minister, dies

John Laughlin, minister of music at First Church, Meridian, for 27 years, died of cancer June 28. Funeral services were held June 30 at University Baptist Church, Hattiesburg. He would have been 62 on July 10.

Laughlin, who was born in Louisiana, studied at Acadia Academy. He was graduated from Louisiana College and New Orleans Seminary. He was minister of music in Louisiana and Texas churches before moving to Meridian in 1961.

"Big John the Cajun" many had called him, for he billed himself that way as an after-dinner entertainer.

Survivors include his wife, Jeanne; two daughters; two sons; and four grandchildren.

He led the music at First, Meridian, through September of 1987 and then took medical leave.

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Homecomings

Antioch, Columbus: homecoming and 40th anniversary; July 31; services, 9:45 (Sunday School), 11 (morning worship); following dinner on the grounds will be a praise service; Larry Hill and Banks Hardy, both former pastors, speaking at morning worship and praise service respectively; James Harrington Jr., pastor.

Arm (Lawrence): July 17, Tommy Morgan, pastor of Arm, 1971-72, speaking at 11 a.m. service; lunch at noon, fellowship hall; Thomas Thurman, originally from Arm, missionary to Bangladesh, speaking at 1:30 service; John Adams, pastor.

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ACTS

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Effective June 5, 1988

CT	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5	Joy Made	Sgt. Preston	Adventures of	Great Churches	Carrollwood	Great Churches	The Bible
6	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today
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Dealing with complaints: Moses challenges murmurers

By Robert Earl Shirley
Exodus 16

The faith that allowed the people to follow Moses into the wilderness soon grew thin in the face of the hardships they were to find there.



Shirley

Disregarding the cloud that symbolized Jehovah's presence and leadership, they began to complain of hunger and expressed a desire to have remained in Egypt where food had supposedly been plentiful. In this time of self-pity, they forgot that they had cried out to God for deliverance and that he had heard them.

Furthermore, they failed to remember or else lightly esteemed the promises of God to give to the descendants of Abraham the land of Canaan as an inheritance. God has never promised that following him will be easy and free of troubles and frustrations. Instead, he gives the assurance that he will be with us every step of the way if we will only walk with him.

Perhaps because the need in that day did ob-

UNIFORM

viously exist, God promised to provide meat and bread on a daily basis. They were to be given flesh to eat at evening, and in the morning, they would be filled with bread. Thus, they were to know that Jehovah is God.

Because Moses was simply leading in the way and direction that God had commanded him, Israel's complaint was actually against God himself. It did no real good to complain to their leader for he was just as dependent upon God for the necessities of life as they were. Since they had seen the plagues and the miracles that had made possible their escape from Egypt, one would have expected that these former slaves would not be characterized by faith and courage. Such was not to be the case, but were they any different from many of us today? With all of our blessings, we are still prone to complain and even allow our faith to falter at the slightest inconvenience or disappointment.

In promising to provide these basic needs, God explained that his provision would help those who were murmuring to understand who

he was. "Then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out of Egypt."

Those who have tried to explain that the quails that suddenly appeared and the manna that rained from the heavens were the result of natural phenomena have little to support their contentions. The fact that the birds appeared at the exact moment they were needed and the manna appeared in a form and amount not found anywhere else in the land indicates that they were of divine origin and were God given.

Today we all too often accept our day by day blessings without stopping to consider from whence they came or to give thanks to him for his provision and care. One is likely to pray fervently for the answer to a perplexing problem, but when the answer comes, he assumes it would have come anyway or else gives credit to his own ingenuity, hard work, or resourcefulness. Surely more things are still wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

God was freely offering his blessings, but obedience and faith were still the requirements for their reception. Each day every man was to gather only that which was needed for his fami-

ly for that day. Those who selfishly took more than the prescribed amount found the excess spoiled and worm-eaten the next morning. We are reminded that in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, they were to ask for their "daily bread." Such faith allows a person to live each and every day to the fullest without being anxious about tomorrow. One is admonished to walk by faith and not by sight.

The one exception to the rule for gathering came on the sixth day when a double portion that was gathered remained unspoiled for eating the next day. Even under those conditions, God's people needed to observe the Sabbath that they might be rested physically, refreshed, and fed spiritually as well.

God's actions here in the wilderness demonstrate that he hears the murmurings of his people, wherever they may be, that he is concerned about their every need, and that he has the power to help, regardless of what one's problem may be. The answer may not come in the way or the time that one expects or desires it, but he will never leave nor forsake us.

Robert Earl Shirley is pastor, emeritus, Parkway, Tupelo.

Jesus teaches disciples about right relationships

By Frank H. Thomas, Jr.
Matthew 18:1-19:15

Jesus was concerned about right relationships. The disciples seemed to be concerned about more selfish matters such as who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.



Thomas

This is a secular concern, for the heathen think this way. Followers of Jesus are not concerned or worried about who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In answer to their question, Jesus called a child whom he set in the midst of them. He then taught the disciples that unless they were converted and became as little children, humble and trusting, they could not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus continued in this vein, that those who would receive such a little child in Jesus' name would receive him as well. But if they should offend one of these little ones — be it a child, or be it some other little one or unfortunate one or sick one — then judgment would be severe. It would be better for that person if a millstone were tied about his neck and he were drowned in the sea. Followers of Jesus should be careful

BIBLE BOOK

lest they offend someone and keep that one from Jesus.

The teaching about cutting off the hand or cutting off the foot or plucking out the eye is meant to stress the importance of the total personality and the total personhood in its effect upon someone else. All that we are and have has the potential of affecting someone else positively or negatively for Christ. If anything about us would offend someone, then we should change it and make sure that it does not offend someone or keep them from the kingdom.

The responsibility which followers of Jesus have for the little ones, the weak ones, or the unfortunate ones must be measured against God's care and commitment to them. Jesus said clearly in verse 11 that the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. He gave the parable of the hundred sheep and used the example of the shepherd who would not rest even though 99 of them were safe until he had found and rescued the one lost sheep. So is the concern of Jesus for even one little one, that this one should not perish or be lost but that this one should be saved. So the disciples of Jesus should

be concerned about even one little one or one sinner.

In verses 15-20, a method of righting a wrong is listed which in years past was used widely in Baptist churches. This method has three parts: One, if a person trespasses against you, go and tell him the problem and work it out with him alone. Two, if he will not hear you, take one or two others as witnesses and try again to work out the problem. Three, if the brother still fails to be reconciled, then you should tell the matter to the church and let the church make its suggestions for reconciliation or for discipline as the case may be. This matter of dealing with offenses in the church should be dealt with in the context of worship, reconciliation, restoration, and God's care for each of his followers.

A closely related subject is forgiveness which covers the balance of chapter 18. In order to illustrate his statement that forgiveness was to be unconditional (that is, until seventy times seven), Jesus told about a certain ruler who forgave a large debt which was owed him by one of his servants. This servant, on the other hand, refused to forgive a much smaller debt owed to him by another servant. The ruler was angry with this servant who had been forgiven much and threw him into prison until such time as he

could pay every penny. Whenever offenses occur between Christians, we should be guided by the principle of unlimited forgiveness and desire for reconciliation and restoration.

In chapter 19, the first 12 verses pertain to questions about marriage. Men were divorcing their wives for little or no cause at all. They were using the commandment of Moses about divorce as their justification for doing whatever they wanted to do. Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees and others that God's intention for marriage was that a husband and wife should become one flesh. What God had joined together, no one should ever put asunder.

The law of Moses about divorce was given to men because of their sin and their hardness of heart. God did not intend this, and those who were treating their wives and their marriages in a cavalier fashion were actually committing adultery and causing their poor spouses to become adulterers as well.

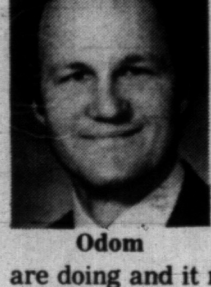
Jesus took marriage with infinite seriousness, and so must we in our day. God's people must not become so insensitive to others that we ignore or reject those who need us and who need the Lord.

Frank Thomas is pastor, Alta Woods, Jackson.

God's love will find a way — without exception

By Steve Odom
Hosea 3:1; 11:1-4, 8-9

What is love? A question like that conjures up all kinds of images in our minds, doesn't it? We may think back to the first time we heard one or both of our parents say to us, "I love you."



Odom

Whether at age two or age 22, that kind of memory tends to bring warmth and a sense of well-being to us. Along with that memory may come the recollection of the times that, in one way or another, our parents said to us, "I do not like what you are doing and it must stop."

Sooner or later we were faced with what seemed to be a contradiction. How can my mother or father say "I love you" and then keep me from doing whatever I want to do? Some of us at age 32 or 42 may still be struggling with the answer to that question!

In academic circles, the attempt to define a subject may involve a process called delimitation. This simply means (though sometimes the process is not so simple) that a person tells

LIFE AND WORK

what that subject is not or does not include. We can say a few things about what love is not or does not include.

In the New Testament, the apostle, Paul, gave us a good idea of what love is not. Remember I Corinthians 13? Love is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Love never fails. That is, it keeps on going no matter what.

How fortunate we are if we find or have found ourselves in a relationship characterized by such a love, a love that will remain constant even in the face of our unfaithfulness. As much as we have been loved by parents and friends, the truth is that human relationships are characterized more by conditions than constancy. People love people based on certain conditions that must be met in order for love to be earned. That is the opposite of the love of God.

The prophet Hosea spoke pointedly to the

Northern Kingdom of Israel about their failure to be loyal to God's love for them. God had initiated the relationship of covenant love and the Hebrew people turned their backs on God for the lure of foreign gods. Like a spouse who walked away from a marriage for another partner, Israel had "turned into other gods" (3:1). Hosea had been courageous enough to marry Gomer, the harlot, as a prophetic act. He was to constantly reclaim her as a picture of God's never-ending love for his people.

God's love is always redeeming. Hosea literally had to buy Gomer in order to begin the process of reorienting her to a different lifestyle. He cared enough about her to invest his own resources and energies in her redemption. It was an invitation to respond to unconditional love.

Perhaps, like us, Gomer had to be constantly reminded that this kind of love makes no demands, but only invites response. Hard to believe? Yes. Impossible to believe! Presbyterian minister and novelist, Frederick Buechner, has said that the love of God is almost like a fairy-tale, that is, it is too good to be true and difficult to believe that anyone could

possibly love like that. But it is true, and it is not fairy-tale, it is gospel!

God's love is also realistic. God knows how difficult it is for us when we establish certain patterns of thinking and behaving. Though many times conversion and repentance are radical, time is still required for us to begin thinking and acting in new ways. But the time does come, and God patiently waits for his children to respond to his love. The process is often painful for us and for God. Sometimes children insist on walking in harm's way even when their parents lovingly, but firmly, remind them of the consequences. So it was with Israel (11:1-7), so it is with us.

We must never forget that God's love is finally rewarding. Our insistence on our own way leads us into jungles of confusion and darkness where we cry out like infants for the safety and security of home. And maybe, just maybe, our troubles will send us back to God, back to the One who loved us from the beginning more than we could ever believe (11:8-9). And then maybe we will never forget that, without exception, God's love will find a way.

Steve Odom is pastor, University Church, Hattiesburg.

Baptist Record

Volunteers steam ahead in Steamboat, Nevada

By Charles R. Rogers

"We're growing," says Don Griffin of Centreville, incoming Brotherhood director for the Mississippi Association. For the past three years, the association has sent a team of men to assist a church in a mission area in constructing a building. "The last two years we have gone to Montana," said Griffin. This year the association sent two teams to Steamboat Baptist Church in Steamboat, Nevada.

A suburb of Reno, Steamboat is a growing area, ripe for the Gospel. "We are so close to hell, at night you can see Sparks," says church member Fred Rowan. Sparks is also a Reno suburb.

"It was a scary feeling at first," said Jim Meek, who began the work in Steamboat nine years ago. "I was afraid nobody would come that first Sunday we met," said Meek. "But we had one person saved, and two more joined the church. We have continued to grow ever since."

When a mission project near Carson City, Nevada, fell through, the mission pastor put Griffin, who was coordinating the trips, in touch with the folks in Steamboat. "We appreciate the men of the Mississippi Association coming to help us with our new auditorium," said Meek.

"They have worked miracles on this building."

With the help of some of the church members, the men of the association were able to get to 6,100 square foot, two-story building framed with plywood siding in place, in addition to installing the windows and electrical conduit. "I think our men have done a fine job," said mission team member Roger McGraw of Woodville, one of the few professional builders on either team. "We are not builders by trade," said Griffin. "We just come ready to work and Roger tells us what to do. We enjoy helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. We leave to go home with sore thumbs and tired bodies, but blessed by the people we meet and the fellowship we share in Christ."

"If the rest of the men in the association are anything like these men, it is a great association," said Meek. "We're growing," says Griffin, "but we still have a ways to go. We need to get every church involved." In conclusion Griffin adds, "The help we provide for the churches where we go is nothing compared to the blessings we receive."

Charles Rogers is a free lance writer from Centreville.



Gary Sullivan of Centreville cuts plywood for the pulpit/choir area of the new auditorium.



One of the men nails a brace in place as other men stand by to insert the window.



Don Griffin of Centreville and Roger McGraw of Woodville battle gale force winds and temperatures in the 40s as they roll out tar paper on the roof of the new auditorium.

WMU invites applications for Second Century Fund grants

By Karen Benson

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Applications are being accepted now through Sept. 15 for the first grants to be awarded from the Second Century Fund of national Woman's Missionary Union.

The WMU executive board established the fund two years ago as an endowment for the development of women's work for missions around the world, according to Catherine Allen, associate executive director of national WMU. Wilda Fancher, president of Mississippi WMU, is a member of the Second Century Fund Committee.

Grants from the Second Century Fund will be awarded in three main areas: to support WMU leadership development in the United States, including developing WMU organizations in new areas or among new groups; to support leadership development of Baptist women and girls abroad, including assisting organizations similar to WMU; and to encourage an emphasis on WMU and missions education in Southern Baptist seminaries.

Examples of the types of projects which could receive funding include:

translating and publishing WMU manuals in foreign languages; providing short-term operating funds for a new state WMU organization; sponsoring a lecture at a seminary; or providing scholarships for WMU officers abroad to receive education or training.

"The Second Century Fund is designed to supplement ongoing missions work," said Carolyn Weatherford, national WMU executive director.

"It is an investment in shoring up the foundation of mission support in the future. As women and girls have the opportunity for development through literature, training and inspiration about missions, they, in turn, will lead others to support and participate in missions," Weatherford said.

The fund was established with some WMU reserve funds. WMU officials expect it to grow through the years

from memorial gifts; bequests from the estates of WMU members and missions leaders; and special gifts from major donors.

All contributions to the fund will be invested as principal. Only the interest will be spent to award grants. Grant recipients will be determined by the WMU executive board.

Applications are available by writing: Second Century Fund, Woman's Missionary Union, P. O. Box C-10, Birmingham, AL 35283-0010.

The only time in a person's earthly existence that he's really alone is when he's born and at the time of his death. Between are many meetings of a few dear friends and thousands of strange faces. — Tex McPherson, Dallas

Missionary news

Jimmy and Charlotte Walker, former missionaries to Bophuthatswana, Africa, who have been living in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, since June, 1986, have moved to Atmore, Ala. He has assumed the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Atmore. Their address is 1101 1st Ave., Atmore, Ala. 36502.

Johnny and Beth Presley, missionary to Brazil, have arrived on the field to begin language study (address: Caixa Postal 1635, 13.100 Campinas, SP, Brazil). He was born in Chicago, Ill., and considers Louisville, Miss., his hometown. The former Beth Neal, she was born in DeKalb, Miss., and considers Decatur, Miss., her hometown.

Vic and Martha Bowman, missionaries to Chile, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: Rt. 2, Box 178, Pelahatchie, Miss. 39145). He was born in Brandon and considers Pelahatchie his hometown. The former Martha Martin, she was born in Jackson and considers Mendenhall her hometown.

Donald and Elsie Brown, associates to Israel, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: Baptist Village Mobile Post, Central Sharon 45,875, Israel). He was born in El Dorado, Ark. The former Elsie Word, she was born in Coahoma County, Miss..

Mike and Annette Racey, missionaries to Chile, report a change of address (Casilla 373, Chillan, Chile). They consider Biloxi, Miss., their hometown. The former Annette Evans, she was born in Mobile, Ala.

Dennis and Margaret McCall, missionaries to Zaire, are the parents of John Robert, born May 20. They are in France for language study (address: 25, rue du Grand Marche, 3700 Tours, France). He is a native of Vicksburg. The former Margaret Hill, she was born in Atlanta, Ga.

Mike and Wanda Newton, missionaries to Korea, have completed furlough and returned to the field (address: P. O. Box 5, NAM Taegu 634, Korea). He is a native of Louisiana. The former Wanda Dedeaux, she was born in Hattiesburg.

Betty Hart, missionary to Chile, has returned to the field (address: Casilla 197, Antofagasta, Chile). Born in New Orleans, La., she grew up in Sandy Hook, Miss. She was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1964.

Donald and Anne Dent, missionaries to Singapore, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: Pine Trails Apt., #M-5, Clinton, Miss. 39056). He was born in Jackson and considers Holly Springs his hometown. She is the former Anne Jones of Brookhaven.

Widow of Porter Routh dies

NASHVILLE (BP) — Ruth Purtle Routh, wife of the late Southern Baptist executive Porter W. Routh, died June 26 in Nashville following an extended illness. She was 74.

Mrs. Routh was born in Sulphur, Okla., in 1913. She graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee in the early 1930s and was named an OBU distinguished alumna in 1982.

She and her husband were married for more than 52 years prior to his death Nov. 7, 1987. He was executive secretary (now president) and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee from 1951 to 1979 and was editor of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger, and worked on the staff of the Southern Baptist Sunday

School Board.

Mrs. Routh was a home economics teacher in Oklahoma before her children were born. She traveled around the world with her husband several times, visiting Southern Baptist mission fields.

She was involved in the support of Clover Bottom Developmental Center in Nashville and was a parent representative on the center's human rights committee.

She is survived by five children: son Charles of Seattle; daughters Betsy Routh Green of Wichita, Kan.; Dorothy Routh of Tallahassee, Fla.; Susan Routh of Nashville; and Lelia Routh Cothen of Cheverly, Md.; seven grandchildren; and a sister, Frances Graves of Midwest City, Okla.

Baptist Record

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July 14, 1988

'Mr. Postmaster General, do you know a Baptist?'

RUSCHLIKON, SWITZERLAND — Isaac William, a Pakistan-born Baptist evangelist in the Sultanate of Oman became a participant in the Summer Institute for Theological Education, in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in an unusual way. William's saga began with a letter written while he was living in Oman. The Sultanate of Oman is a large country located on the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula.

In Pakistan Isaac had been a Christian of the Brethren-Baptist denomination. In 1979 he travelled to Oman to seek employment, which he found with the Oman Air

Force. Prohibited from evangelizing the Muslim population of Oman, he became interested in working with local Christians who did not have a church. After four years his missionary activities caused him to lose his job with the Air Force.

One day Isaac William read about Southern Baptists in America, and he wanted to learn more about them. So, he decided to write them a letter. William wrote to "Dear President, Southern Baptist Church," requesting discipleship instruction and Bibles. His only problem was he didn't know where to send the

letter. After praying, he decided to address it to "General Post Master, New York, New York," requesting that the Postmaster General forward it to "the President of the Southern Baptists." To his joy, sometime later William received a letter from the New York Baptist Association and still later some Bibles and books from the SBC Foreign Mission Board in Richmond.

William eventually heard about SITE from Isam Ballenger, Southern Baptist FMB vice president for Europe and the Middle East, on one of Ballenger's visits to Oman. Details were worked out

and doors were opened, and at long last Isaac has just completed his first SITE program.

Issac states, "SITE has been a wonderful experience." He considers the theological teaching useful for his evangelistic work in Oman, William explains that his mind has been enlightened through learning some new methods of studying the Bible. He said, "Everything I have gained is important for my work in Oman."

William is presently assistant pastor for the Protestant Church of Oman in Ruwi, whose members come from twelve denominations. Ruwi is a westernized city with a

strong British influence. The style of life in the Sultanate of Oman is strongly Muslim. Non-Muslims are not allowed to be part of the ruling class, or the government. The ordinary labor force is thus largely composed of Asians.

Oman is a land of contrasts where the ruling classes are very wealthy, while the Bedouins do not even own shoes. Of particular concern to William is the fact that there is little freedom for women. Women can be sold to a husband at a very young age by their fathers, and they have no say in the matter. "Christ could change that," he says.

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JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Saturday, July 21, 1988

Susan heads south on 'wings of prayer'

By Susan Todd

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Susan Partridge found more than just a few new friends at Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

She found a support system of 1,600 praying women who literally have prayed her to Brazil.

Each evening during the convocation, WMU national Executive Director Carolyn Weatherford led the group in a missions prayer. She shared Partridge's story with the group and asked them to join in prayer for answers.

Partridge, from Barron, Wis., was appointed as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary last summer at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center in New Mexico. Life has been one roadblock after another ever since.

After completing missionary orientation in November and December of last year, Partridge thought she would be on her way to begin working as a teacher at the WMU Training School in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. But she wasn't.

She began waiting and working through the onslaught of paperwork necessary to move into a foreign country. She applied for a visa, applied for acceptance into the country as a missionary and completed a myriad of other requirements.

Nothing happened.

Partridge had gone through orientation with three other missionary families headed for Brazil. Their paperwork was completed, and they left for Brazil in April.

"I was so disappointed, but I was reminded by something I had read to not point a finger at a person or persons saying, 'This is your fault,'" she said. "The book said to see how you can glorify God in things."

Partridge has done just that.

Her best opportunity came at Ridgecrest during WMU week. And

1,600 women got to watch as it happened.

The group prayed Monday evening, July 4, that Partridge's 11-week wait on her visa would end and that approval would be granted. Tuesday at 4 p.m., Partridge received word from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board that her visa had been granted.

Weatherford announced the good news during the Tuesday evening session. The message was met with a round of applause from the women whom Partridge has described as her support system.

But the rejoicing was not over. One hurdle remained. Partridge needed to secure a seat on a plane to Brazil by July 20.

On Tuesday evening, Weatherford asked the group to pray that Partridge's plane ticket would be granted.

Partridge had contacted a travel agent on Tuesday with her request and was told nothing was available. The agent asked her to check back on Wednesday.

When she called Wednesday, Partridge reported, the travel agent said, "You must be living right."

The travel agent explained that a cancellation had just been received for a window seat in the non-smoking section of a plane headed for Brazil July 20.

Partridge told the travel agent, "No, it's not that I'm living right but the prayers of this group."

"You tell them their prayers worked," replied the travel agent.

Partridge gave all the glory to God for the turn of events: "I believe God allowed the delays for a purpose. I believe part of it is so that he would get the glory. And I think it has encouraged a lot of people to see their prayers at work."

And Partridge almost didn't even come to WMU week at Ridgecrest.

"I got to know Betty Lynn Cadle, the

WMU executive director in Minnesota and Wisconsin," Partridge said. "She said, 'you've got to have an understanding of what's supporting you as you go to Brazil.'"

So Partridge came to Ridgecrest for her first time.

"It's been the most wonderful thing. I've never realized the support system

that is behind missionaries," she said.

Both of her parents are dead, and she said she is especially thankful to have made special friends with the women of WMU. In a way, she said, these newfound friends take the place of family, knowing many Baptists at home support her.

"This week has been an

unbelievable climax. I've been overwhelmed by it all," she said.

Of the women, she said: "They were so confident I'd hear something. I'm glad they have had a part in it."

"See, the neat thing about this whole thing is that God's getting the glory, and that's what I've wanted."

Susan Todd writes for WMU, SBC.



Susan Partridge, a newly appointed Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, found new friends and an enthusiastic support system in the women attending Woman's Missionary

Union week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center. (Photo by Louise Barbour).

Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

Freedom for news

Perhaps at the heart of the Southern Baptist Controversy is an issue that has nothing at all to do with theology. It is freedom for news operations within the Southern Baptist ranks, and particularly for Baptist Press, the nationwide news gathering and disseminating agency among Southern Baptists.

The problem stems from a situation that could have been, and was, foreseen many years ago; but there was nothing that could have been done about it. Baptist Press resides with the SBC Executive Committee, and there is the problem. There are some on the Executive Committee who are beginning to want to tell Baptist Press what to put in its news releases.

Baptist Press was not placed with the Executive Committee so that the Executive Committee could be its editor. It is simply a financial arrangement. Baptist Press was formed more than 40 years ago as a service to the Baptist state papers and was first placed with the Sunday School Board. It was felt that being financed by an agency of the convention was not a good situation, so it was moved to the Executive Committee. It is there for financial purposes only, not for control. Control of Baptist Press actually rests with the state papers. Baptist Press has its effectiveness only in its use, and the state papers do not use what they do not want.

The organization of Baptist state papers, the Southern Baptist Press Association, has been a reality for 65 years. The Southern Baptist Press

Association has a committee which has as its purpose a liaison arrangement with Baptist Press. It is called the Baptist Press Liaison Committee. That committee now is in a struggle over the credibility of Baptist Press. Baptist Press is a credible operation. The Baptist Press Liaison Committee is trying to feud off efforts from within the Executive Committee itself to compromise its credibility.

At the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis there was a motion to ask the Executive Committee to survey Baptist Press for the past 10 years. The Executive Committee assigned this matter to the committee's public relations workgroup, which reported in February that a 10-year survey was an impossible task and would cause investigation of personalities no longer in the employment of the Executive Committee. The committee report asked Baptist Press to use caution in its reporting but asked for no action. The Executive Committee took none.

In September of 1987, however, Baptist Press released a story noting that Executive Committee member Paul Pressler of Houston had complained that the Radio and Television Commission was using for its broadcasts personalities such as Richard Jackson and James Flamming, who had been candidates for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. Baptist Press reported that as if Pressler were saying that such exposure to candidates was unfair, and that is the way it sounded to this editor. I was there when Pressler

spoke. Pressler claims that he was making the point that using candidates in such a way could cost the Radio and Television Commission needed financing. He demanded an apology from Al Shackleford, the director of Baptist Press. Shackleford didn't apologize because he felt there had been no error. The speakers had not been candidates when they were chosen to speak.

Pressler continued to pursue the matter in spite of the fact that the Executive Committee took no action in February, and his quest finally resulted in the charge he made against Baptist Press in the June meeting of the Executive Committee in San Antonio. This was reported in the Baptist Record of June 30 and is the subject of a letter to the editor in this issue.

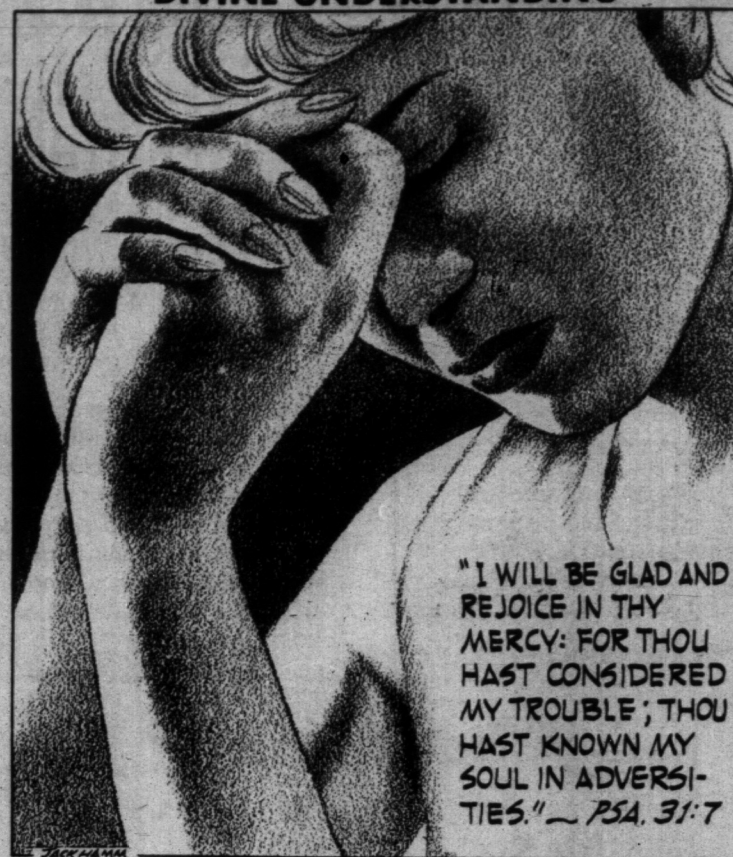
Pressler's motion to deal with Baptist Press was tabled. Hopefully, he will let the matter lie there. There is nothing to be gained by pursuing the matter further.

There are six editors who make up the Baptist Press Liaison Committee. They are monitoring the situation very carefully. The six are J. B. Fowler, New Mexico; Mike McCollough, Nevada; Julian Pentecost, Virginia; Lynn Clayton, Louisiana; Jack Sanford, Kentucky; and Don McGregor, Mississippi.

Baptist Press must remain free. There are efforts to intimidate both Baptist Press and the Baptist state papers. So far they have not been successful.

They must not be.

DIVINE UNDERSTANDING



"I WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THY MERCY: FOR THOU HAST CONSIDERED MY TROUBLE; THOU HAST KNOWN MY SOUL IN ADVERSITIES." — Psa. 31:7

Cecil named to direct volunteer projects

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — James W. Cecil has been named to direct Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board projects involving short-term Southern Baptist volunteers to Canada and Spanish-speaking Latin America.

As one of four associate directors in the board's Volunteers in Missions department, Cecil will help churches, associations and state conventions plan and organize their participation

in volunteer projects with missionaries and national Baptists in 17 countries.

Until May 2, Cecil, 57, directed the board's Laity Abroad program, an arm of the Volunteers in Missions department charged with organizing the ministries of Southern Baptists traveling or working abroad and helping to place Southern Baptists in secular jobs overseas.

Guest opinion . . .

How recent is the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer?

By Bob Rogers

Much has been said about the Southern Baptist Convention resolution this year which appears to back off of the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in order to stress the rule of the pastor. I would like to comment on one statement in the resolution which says, "the high profile emphasis on the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in Southern Baptist life is a recent historical development." Just how recent is this doctrine?

Before giving an answer, let's be clear what we mean by "priesthood of the believer." Below is the doctrine as stated in the constitution of my church, which we got from another Southern Baptist church:

"We believe in the priesthood of all

believers; that Christ is our great High Priest and through him every born-again person has direct access into God's presence without need of a human priest; that the believer has the right and responsibility to personally study and interpret the Scriptures, guided by the Holy Spirit."

If this definition of the doctrine is accepted, it would seem that the doctrine asserts three truths:

- 1) Every Christian has access to God through Christ, not through an earthly priest.
- 2) Every Christian should interpret Scripture for himself.
- 3) The guide for interpretation is the Holy Spirit, not men.

How recent are these ideas? The 1988 doctrine study book by Walter

Shurden is on this doctrine. Is this something new? Many Baptists can remember studying this doctrine for years in Church Training literature. Perhaps "recent" means in the last few decades.

In 1908, E. Y. Mullins, a Mississippi native and president of Southern Baptist Seminary, published *Axioms of Religion*, an influential book setting forth the Baptist belief in the competency of every soul to relate directly to God. Perhaps "recent" means since 1908.

In 1682 a group of Baptists at Kittery, Maine, adopted a covenant which they took with them when they settled at Charleston, South Carolina, and founded the first Baptist church in the South in 1696. Part of their covenant

pledges obedience to the Bible "according to ye grace of God and light as present through his grace given us, or here after he shall please to discover and make known to us through his Holy Spirit . . ." Sounds like the priesthood of the believer, doesn't it? Perhaps "recent" means since 1696.

Baptists originated in England, where there were two kinds of Baptists: General and Particular. In 1677, Particular Baptists adopted a confession which said, "God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men . . . and the requiring of an implicit Faith, and absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience . . ." In 1679 the

General Baptists adopted a statement with almost exactly the same words. These ideas of a conscience free from blind obedience to men sounds like the priesthood of the believer, doesn't it? Perhaps "recent" means since 1677.

The SBC resolution passed this year by a group heavily dominated by pastors calls for submission to pastoral authority rather than the "recent" ideas of believer priesthood. In 1610 Thomas Helwys, a layman, dared to disagree with his pastor, John Smith, and take a small group with him to establish the first Baptist church in England. Perhaps "recent" means since 1610.

Bob Rogers is pastor of Calvary Church, Gloster.

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